学生の移動動機と人生経路の理解に向けて 日本におけるタジキスタン出身学生たち

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Understanding Students Mobility Motivations and Life Trajectories:

Tajikistani Students in Japan

A Dissertation

Submitted to the University of Tsukuba

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Nazira SODATSAAYROVA

2018
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved Family and Friends, for all your love, support and sacrifices you made throughout my life. Without your support, this feat would have been impossible.
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<td>AKHP</td>
<td>The Aga Khan Humanities Project</td>
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<td>AKL</td>
<td>The Aga Khan Lycée</td>
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<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Central Asia/ Asian</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIS</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
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<td>EA</td>
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<td>EE</td>
<td>East Asia</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>EC</td>
<td>Education Corporation</td>
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<td>JICA</td>
<td>Japan International cooperation Agency</td>
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<td>JDS</td>
<td>Japanese Grant Aid for Human Resource Development Scholarship</td>
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<td>HE</td>
<td>Higher education</td>
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<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
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<td>MEXT</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOOC</td>
<td>Massive open online course</td>
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<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>North America</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>ODA</td>
<td>Official Development Assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSCA</td>
<td>Post-Soviet Central Asia</td>
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<td>PLTC</td>
<td>Preparatory Language Training Course</td>
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<td>RF</td>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
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<td>SU</td>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
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<td>TEMPUS</td>
<td>Trans European Mobility Program for University Studies</td>
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<td>TNE</td>
<td>Transnational Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>TGY</td>
<td>Top Global University</td>
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<td>TGUP</td>
<td>Top Global University Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics</td>
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1.1 Introduction to the Study

A local Tajik proverb goes: “A person’s achievements depend on each footstep he takes”\(^1\) and this captures well the focus of this thesis which examines the mobility motivation and experience of Tajikistani students in Japan. The link between travel and education is a long established one in Central Asia. Many local Tajik proverbs refer to travel and the pursuit of knowledge, and these are thought to originate from the poems and philosophy of classical authors such as Nasir Khusraw, Abuabdulloi Rudaki, Farridudini Attor (themselves travelers seeking knowledge) amongst other prominent figures in Central Asia’s intellectual history. In that sense, the students currently traveling to Japan are therefore following a long and an old tradition.

My interest in this enquiry originated in my own move to Japan for further study. I was surprised to find a group of Tajikistani students already here before me. I had thought Japan was a new destination of Tajikistanis and wondered how these students had come there, what motivated them and what they thought and felt about being in Japan. I wanted to explore the students’ international lives and capture the processes of mobility that had brought them to this new international context and thus began my research.

Despite the increase in interest in the topic of educational mobility, Tajikistan student mobility in general and in particular to Japan remains under-researched. This thesis seeks to explore and shed some light on the motivations of Tajikistani students studying in Japan, the national and international contexts in which their mobility is framed, and their perceptions and understanding of their rich, complex, and, often, life changing experiences abroad. Specifically, it

---

\(^1\) The original language: *Rizqi mard dar qadami mard* (A person’s achievements depend on each footstep he takes). The proverb does not necessarily refer to knowledge seeking, but rather its meaning is very broad and applied in the everyday life and discussions of the Tajik people.
examines the educational mobility motivations and impact(s) of experiences on the life trajectories of students from the post-Soviet,\(^2\) post-conflict\(^3\) country of Tajikistan from 2009-2017.\(^4\) The study focuses on the perception of those students who have spent at least one year in Japan.\(^5\) It interrogates their choice of Japan, a country that is ideologically and socially very different from the post-Soviet Union countries, as the country in which to continue their education. Finally, it examines the impact of mobility on their life trajectories.

The reminder of this chapter introduces the context of the study and discusses the collapse of the Soviet Union and the international relations between Tajikistan and Japan; before presenting the research questions, the conceptual framework and significance of the study, and finally, the organization of the study.

### 1.2 Tajikistan: A Brief Overview

Tajikistan is a small mountainous landlocked country in Central Asia. Tajikistan borders Western China, Northern Pakistan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan (see Figure 1.1). The population of Tajikistan has reached 9 million,\(^6\) of whom 72 percent live in rural areas.\(^7\) In 1929 Tajikistan became part of the Soviet Socialist Republic and in 1991, after collapse of the Soviet

---

\(^2\) Although, there is debate among scholars about the label of “post-Soviet” country which, demonstrate this label is no longer applicable after 26 years of collapse (there is also a great debate around notion of ‘collapse’ whether the system collapses or not?) of the Soviet Union countries. What is significant in this paper, the notion of post-Soviet used to as demarcation between other studies and at the same time, there are students who indicate to importance of this period. There are another group of students who did not live in this period but the experience of their parents or the teacher connect them to the era indirectly. There is connection and presence of past in the present moment.

\(^3\) Post-conflict is defined, “in which open warfare has come to an end” and it is significant to discuss about this notion as conflict creates vulnerable societies and more poverty (Junne & Verkoren, 2005, p.1).


\(^5\) Time period was significant in a sense that students could adjust to every day’s life but less than a year period of time is too short for students to adjust.


\(^7\) Statistical Yearbook, Statistics Agency under the president of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2015. 93 percent of Tajikistan covered by mountains.
Union, gained its independence. Sadly, this led to a civil war (1992 – 1997) which further exacerbated the chaos created by the collapse of the Soviet Union. The country therefore is both a post-Soviet one as well as a post-conflict one. While there has been peace and stability in the country since the early 2000s this recent history has colored the country’s development trajectory including its education system.

Figure 1.1 Administrative Map of Tajikistan

Source: Taken from Unpublished Dissertation by Anise Waljee (2010, p.21).

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8 The original source of above map is not available.
1.2.1 Tajikistan and the Collapse of the Soviet Union

The collapse of the Soviet Union was transformative. An entire political, ideological and economic system crumbled, leaving in its wake both initial euphoria, as nations either regained their former independence or came into being for the first time, and chaos, as they struggled with the complexities of the political, economic and social transformations that they found themselves having to deal with (De Young & Balzhan, 1997; Popova, 2002). The transition from communism and planned economies towards democracy and a market economy was both complex and traumatic. The established state-citizen accord under which education, health care, employment and social security were guaranteed rights for citizens suddenly dissolved leaving populations without jobs, without employment and without social security. They did not know where to turn, or how to manage. In Tajikistan the situation was made worse by a devastating civil war from 1992 to 1997.¹ Not only could the state not meet its social obligations, the rule of law no longer existed. People were displaced, unsafe, and unable to maintain any sense of normalcy in their lives.

In the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet System and the civil war, the political disruption resulted, not surprisingly, in the lower classroom attendance of students because of poverty and security reasons (Silova, 2011; Mertaugh, 2004). The collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in dismantling of many systems and structures that had been in place for the citizens, including those for education. The uncertainty and fear generated by the civil war particularly impacted girls’ withdrawal from schools (National Gender Profile Report, 2016, Bliss, 2006; Jonson, 2006).

The civil war precipitated a further crisis (Danzer et al., 2013; Bliss, 2006; Mertaugh, 2004). An extensive – and involuntary— mobilization of Tajikistani people occurred

¹ This data is an official data that shows the war continued for 5 years but this is not realistic to think that everything resolved immediately after signing the peace treaty.
domestically\textsuperscript{10} and internationally as refugees.\textsuperscript{11} In particular, the young generation of students and those who had hoped to continue on to higher education struggled within the collapsed political and educational system and structures. Finding themselves becoming refugees they abandoned their studies and with that their hopes and dreams were lost (Waljee, 2010, p.105). Understanding the complexity of context\textsuperscript{12} is particularly significant in this research as we shall see in Chapters (6; 7 & 8).

1.2.2 Tajikistan: Independence and New Alliances

When Tajikistan finally emerged from the civil war and peace was established in 1997, it found itself thrust into a world in which it had to deal with not only the consequences of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the civil war, but also with the process of globalization that led to “outcomes which were neither planned nor predicted by the official educational policy planners” (Morgan & Kliucharev, 2012, p.6). The change in the political and economic orientation from communism to a form of capitalism, and from a command to a market economy, necessitated deep structural changes which brought both new achievements and challenging results in terms of gaining independence but at the same time saw the country grappling with “epistemological, …ontological…also moral and political” encounters (Keshavjee, 1998, p.2).

The contextual factors of educational mobility motivation and experiences of Tajikistani students are local as well as international, “the transformations arising from individual migration are experienced as local and personal, with the links migrants created between home and away mediated at the household and village level” (McKay, 2006, p.266).

\textsuperscript{10} People were moving from one village to another safer village or even to further safer regions of Tajikistan which was not the case during the Soviet Union.

\textsuperscript{11} Mostly moved to other Central Asian countries such as Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and also Russia.

\textsuperscript{12} Context is both: personal (language, culture, gender, age, ethnicity, family, lifestyle, upbringing, educational level) and environment (macro and meso level; community, state and nation).
Castles et al. (2014, p.75) demonstrate that some countries encourage “temporary migration as a ‘win-win-win’ strategy” and in the case of Tajikistan, the 50 percent of GDP comes from migrant’ remittances. In fact, Tajikistan is becoming a “migrant syndrome” country.

As a consequence, this seems to have created a greater need for migration but it should not be seen as simply evidence to a push factor. Rather, it should be viewed as an indication of how the policies and practices of richer country governments, firms, and international bodies are intertwined with migration (Samers & Collyer, 2017, p. 84).

Little is known about the internal and international mobility in Tajikistan, as there are few academic studies on the educational mobility phenomenon, and government departments do not monitor movements of people within the country (Jones et al., 2007) neither in the field of labor migration nor educational mobility. The information available from the most recent Living Standards Measurement Survey in 2003 suggests that around 11% of the population is migrant in the sense that they were born outside the village or town of their current residence, with the proportions roughly the same for men and women. The notion of mobility itself denotes opportunity but this study demonstrates mobility opportunities are experienced differently among different groups of students, as will be discussed in the findings chapter in more detail.

People continued to move, particularly to Russia and other Commonwealth of Independent States’ (CIS) countries, for both education and to join the labor force. The collapse of the Soviet Union (1991) also created new opportunities, Tajikistan, like the other countries behind ‘the iron curtain’ and sought to forge new international relationships with various countries (Rakhimov, 2013). These new partnerships with Eastern and Western countries opened up new patterns of mobility and encouraged people to move towards borders that become connected with the shared goal of “improving government and education infrastructure” (Altbach & Engberg, 2014, p.13) in the recently emerged countries. Thus, this study is not aiming to examine the globalization and internationalization connections of higher education, rather it takes more micro-level approach
rather than macro level. Although it is cognizant of the role of the macro context that impacts the micro–level choices about where to study.

### 1.2.3 Forging new Relationships: Tajikistan and Japan

One such country with the foreign policy goal to help improve the government and educational infrastructure in places like Tajikistan is Japan. The Japanese were acutely aware of the opportunities created by the collapse of the Soviet Union for increasing their influence in the region. Driven by its “Proactive Contribution to Peace” policy, Japan’s projects to contribute to infrastructure and human resource development in Central Asia started in 1992 with a Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) program in the region. Thereafter Japan established its presence in the region by providing “official development assistance (ODA) and financial loans” (Dadabaev, 2016) in several sectors such as the economy, politics, energy resources, as well as education (Rakhimov, 2014).

Japan recognized Tajikistan as an independent country on December 28, 1991 although it opened its embassy in Tajikistan almost a decade later on January 26, 2002. A program of human resource development through scholarships was also agreed and signed between two ministers of foreign affairs of Tajikistan and Japan (JDS pamphlet, 2016), paving the way for Tajikistanis to study in Japan. As Wildavsky observes that, “forces of globalization that have shaken up almost every sector of the economy have greatly intensified competition and mobility

---


14 Although some studies such as Rakhimov (2013) underlines that “Central Asia and Japanese often refer to long history of trade, cultural and humanitarian relations…along the way of Silk Road,” but these relations were until the Soviet Union, particularly in the context of Tajikistan. During the Soviet Union Tajikistan and Japan did not have any relations, at least in the case of most research participants, Japan was an unfamiliar location for them.


16 The Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship by Japanese Grant Aid (JDS).
in higher education” (Wildavsky, 2010, p.46) and these agreements were in part a response to that phenomenon.

Currently, there are around 40 intergovernmental agreements between Tajikistan and Japan (see section 4.2.3) in several aspects, such as, multilateral cooperation within the framework of international and regional organizations, intergovernmental commission on economic, scientific and technical cooperation and one key point is educational, cultural, infrastructure, health and environmental relations.

Although there are many research studies on the relationship of Central Asia-Japan, not many of them focus on the Japan-Tajikistan connection (Usmonov, 2015). In particular the field of higher education remains underexplored. Japan and Tajikistan educational relations began in 1993. More than 1,800 specialists from Tajikistan received trainings in various courses in Japan and 158-degree students received higher education in Japan, 37 of whom are the focus of this study.

1.2.3.1 Situating the Study in Current Research

There is a dearth of research focusing on students’ educational migration, and this subject has remained marginalized from scholarly attention, particularly research on students coming from the post-conflict region of former Soviet Union countries. Most studies on higher education that do exist are located in comparative study discipline, which provides the larger picture of post-Soviet students’ mobility (Chankseliani, 2017, 2016; Smolentseva, 2012; Silova, 2011; Wilmoth, 2011; Silova et al., 2007) or deal with comparative statistical information on Central Asian countries (Nessipbayeva & Dalayeva, 2013). Only a few studies focus specifically

17 Embassy of Tajikistan in Japan, Personal communication, March 2017.
19 Studies on higher education mobility are much more advanced in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan compare to three other Central Asian countries.
on Tajikistan higher education and these are concerned with the link between higher education and students’ skill mismatch (Jonbekova, 2015) or the challenges of the professoriate (Kataeva, 2017). There is only one research study which focuses on the well-being of Tajikistani students abroad (Sabzalieva, 2012).

To date, very few studies focus on the social aspect of students’ mobility from translocal (local-to-local) perspective particularly in post-Soviet, post-conflict countries. According to Strauss (1987, p.6) “social phenomena is complex phenomena” and researchers should pay attention to “how to capture the complexity of reality (phenomenon) we study, and how to make convincing sense of it” so as not to be trapped in over simplicity. This thesis is the first study that carefully traces the educational mobility of Tajikistani students through exploring student’s perceptions about and experience of higher education mobility.

My study traces the contextual cultural aspects of mobility of students from their home country (Tajikistan) to a specific host country (Japan). I concur with Tan (2015, p.9) who suggests that in order “to have a better understanding of the motivations” it is important to narrow the scope to one individual nation. My interest and concern in paying due attention to the macro and micro contexts which impact student mobility motivation guided my research questions and informed the construction of my conceptual framework. These are the focus of the next section.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions below were designed to help the researcher to understand the motivation and the experiences of Tajikistani students in Japan. They framed the interview questions (see Interview Questions Appendix 1) and seek to shed light on the issues that interested me as a researcher.

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20 By “professoriate,” Kataeva refers to university professors, teachers, or lectures who are involved in grappling with two systems, namely the old Soviet system and the new post-soviet nationalism.
a) What motivates Tajikistani students to pursue higher education in Japanese universities? (Chapter 6).

Through the first question, it was possible to explore the perception of students about the factors influencing their decisions to move from Tajikistan to Japan. This question allowed me to identify both the macro influences of national and international policies as well as micro (family, personal drive that influenced mobility choices).

b) How have students' experiences, while studying and living in Japan, affected their trajectories in life? (Chapter 7).

The second question sought to explore the impact of mobility on students’ educational life trajectories. The question was designed to understand/explore how students see themselves. It sought to understand how they negotiated a new space, a new culture as well as a new educational system. The question led to other questions which captured how students felt they had changed, and their continued, but sometimes altered, connections with their home space.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

There is no single conceptual framework that captured the investigation and the findings of this study. Looking beyond migration and mobility theories that examined the movement of students from Point a to Point b, this study sought to interrogate the student experiences of education in Japan. In the process I realized that this had little meaning if it was not framed in their local experiences before they moved to Japan. The conceptual framework, therefore draws from migration and mobility theories but extends their definition to cover local mobility as well. It was necessary to pay attention to the students’ local educational history as well as their continued connection with their localities while abroad. This link is captured in the concept of
translocality. Finally, given that one cannot travel and experience something new without it impacting one’s own development and growth beyond just acquiring a degree. Hence, several concepts have been brought together and adapted to understand and make visible the complexity of student mobility from Tajikistan, framed as it is in the complicated and sometimes traumatic national changes that have attended it and shaped the current country context (see Conceptual Framework Chapter 3).

1.4.1 Concept of Mobility

Mobility means different things to different people: it seems a very simple concept or idea but at the same time the word describes “complex and changing field of movements” (Williams, 2013). Murphy-Lejeune explains that mobility and migration are “envisaged as two facets of the same phenomenon” and goes on to say:

Migration denotes movements outside one’s country of origin into another for a variety of reasons, leading to change in residence and legal status. By contrast, mobility is a more general term which applies to phenomena other than movements from one national territory to another. It emphasizes first and foremost change. It refers to a specific quality or condition, that of being ‘capable of movement, not fixed, characterized by facility of movement, easily changing, free’ 21… Mobility is the quality of those who can easily move and adapt to different environments. It may be conceived principally as a geographic condition. It may also extend into the linguistic, social, psychological, intellectual, professional, cultural domain. (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002, p.4).

Although both migration and mobility denote movement they describe different actions and a consequence of human’s action. What is important is that mobility is not only phenomenon but

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21 Murphy-Lejeune (2002) highlights that the definition of mobility was taken from Oxford English Dictionary.
it is the physical movement from one place to another but it is more intangible in terms of social, and intellectual.

Most research constitutes mobility as a physical movement that leads to change; however, this conceptualization does not take account of what prompted the move in the first place: motivation, contextual factors, personal desires and choices. Based on my analysis of students’ educational biographies, this thesis argues that mobility is not an event but a process. Here mobility goes beyond the globalization and focuses on internal personal mobility: the meaning of both physical/ geographical and social context in the search of personal acceptance and recognition. Mobility is therefore rooted in the students’ local (geographical) and social and family context and values. It finds expression in the actual educational choices and trajectories which are pursued, and it results in students experiencing changed environments, geographically, culturally, socially and educationally and, in doing so, changes the student her/himself.

1.4.2 Translocality

A translocality lens which pays heed to geography but also to community connections, and cultural ones, constitutes a more holistic lens for examining student motivation for and experience of mobility. In the study, the concept needs to be further extended to take account of micro-contexts. Unlike transnationality, translocality is, “[…] seen as a way of situating earlier de-territorialized notions of transnationalism which focused largely on social networks and economic exchanges. Translocality takes an ‘agency oriented’ approach to transnational migrant experiences” (Brickell & Datta, 2011, p.3).

The theory allows the exploration and recognition of an individual’s multiple hybrid histories: “their politics and social construction, their material geographies, and their connection to other scales and places” (Brickell & Datta, 2011, p.4).
1.4.3 Educational Life Trajectories

For the purposes of this thesis, the term life trajectory draws from several perspectives. The life course perspective “recognizes that the context within which a life transition occurs can determine how it affects an individual’s life trajectory” (Langenkamp, 2011, p.498). The life course approach points to single events that can shape the life trajectories of individuals (Langenkamp, 2011). The life trajectories concept is linked to transition, well-being, and life satisfaction (Tolan & Larsen, 2014). Positive youth development (PYD) is another approach to understand trajectories of youth reveals their major impact as measured by competence (positive view of one’s ability), confidence, connection, character and caring, i.e. the “Five 5Cs” of well-being (Shek & Lin, 2017).

This study focuses on educational life trajectories that reveal the effect of students’ experiences in Japan. This research has confined itself to examining trajectories related to educational choices rather than choices made through the whole life of a human being. Educational trajectories are used to understand the role of mobility on individual students’ lives (Worth & Hardill, 2015).

As mentioned above, the research incorporates the concepts of mobility, translocality and educational life trajectories to understand students’ mobility motivation and experiences. Each concept on its own could not enable me to explore and explain the core of my enquiry. To do that I used a combination of the three concepts, adapting and extending each concept to allow me to keep in the fore of my work and make visible the complexity of the context (both macro and micro) that framed student mobility, the diverse notions of local and international student mobility and the nuances of personal experience, growth and change that the study yielded and that are reflected in later chapters (Conceptual Framework Chapter 3 and Findings Chapters 6 & 7). I argue there is an interplay between the concepts of translocality, mobility and educational
trajectories and that my enquiry is situated at the nexus of this interplay. The next section discusses the methodology in more detail.

1.5 Methodology

A qualitative, rather than quantitative approach was used to capture the lived experiences of students, as this approach helps to better understand the everyday experiences of students. Mason (2002) captures the process well and points out that a qualitative approach:

[E]xplore a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginations of (our) research participants, the ways that social processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work, and the significance of the meanings that they generate (Mason, 2002, p.1).

The strengths of qualitative research that are underlined by scholars such as Mason is manifested in my research. My study explored students’ everyday life experiences and the meaning beyond what they said. Within that I used educational biographical narrative method to collect data from current and former students who have studied in Japan for a year. Semi-structured interviews and biographical narratives were used as research tools to get a deeper understanding of their motivations and experiences. I also used observations, informal conversations, and documentation to augment what the narratives were revealing and to probe further into salient aspects of the biographies. Silvey and Lawson (1999) argue that it is important to approach mobile/migrants from ontological perspective as subjects, because they are “interpreters of their own mobility” motivations and experiences. The biographical/educational narrative methods were used to understand motivation, experiences and the notion of international educational phenomenon (Apiztsch & Siouti, 2007) in Japan.
The sample was drawn from Tajikistani students in Japan and Tajikistan (see Section 5.3). Data was collected from thirty-seven participants in two research countries Tajikistan (former students) and Japan (current students and former students) and was analyzed using a thematic analysis.

By using qualitative research methodology, this study produced sophisticated information and findings not only with respect to international mobility but also domestic mobility of students and their personal and cultural perceptions of personal and educational growth. A thematic analysis was used to capture the richness of data. The research uncovered, among other things, students’ resilience in the face of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the devastating civil war that ensued.

Table 1.1. Snapshot to Research Participants Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total number interviewed: 37

Source: Data collected and compiled by the author.

1.5.1 Delimitation of This Study

The study is limited by my choice of Japan, I have not done comparative study of Tajikistani students in other countries. Another delimiting factor was the choice of participants. I could interview only those students who made it to Japan but this thesis does not consider those who wanted to come to Japan but could not make it to Japan. It would be interesting to study those groups whether their educational mobility motivation was affected by educational mobility
and translocal phenomenon or not. Moreover, I have not done quantitative study as well as a study of macro-level factors affecting mobility and experiences of students.

1.6 Purpose and Significance

This thesis focuses on two understudied areas. Firstly, it examines the role of education and students’ perceptions on motivating factors to go abroad for educational purposes. As already mentioned it focuses specifically on mobility to Japan, to a country that has recently opened up its borders to post-Soviet Union countries. Japan is a country that was ideologically considered to be ‘other,’ historically less connected to and linguistically very different from Tajikistan.

Secondly, it investigates student transformation and looks at how international education in the host country impacts student lives, personal development and students’ own perception of the process of (any) such change. It seeks to do this through exploring the lived experiences of students as they negotiate their lives in Japan and their connections back home translocally.

There are now sizable numbers of Central Asian students expanding towards non-Western countries. Japan as a destination of Tajikistani student is a recent phenomenon and, hence studies on the motivations and experiences of students from post-Soviet Union countries, particularly Central Asian regions moving to new borders such as Japan remains unexplored in both post-Soviet Central Asian literature and Asian regions’ research studies.

This research is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, it focuses on Tajikistan which is a post-Soviet, post-conflict country with the highest number of migrants in the world. This is a very unusual and a very particular context within which student motivation and mobility originates. In case of Central Asian countries, the demand for education is not only economic, but

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22 There were different actors who contributed tremendously in the capacity building through education in Tajikistan such as the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), Open Society Program, UNICEF, Asian Development Bank (ADB), as well as Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).
also demographic because of the high increase of the population such as in the case of Tajikistan.
The findings (Chapter 7) attest to the absolute importance of context in decision making, in finding options for further study and in the role of agency in both of these.

Secondly, Japan is a new destination country. This study qualitatively explores experiences of students in Japan to see how, in what appears to be a very different context, culture and education system, students negotiate their place; and what impact this has on their lives and their growth in their minds. Thirdly, the study draws together the separate concepts of translocality, mobility and life trajectories and adopts them to help understand the complex phenomenon of student mobility from Tajikistan to Japan.

The processes of students’ mobility are explored from the local and personal aspect which, shape each other, although sometimes local can become a barrier for students’ progress. The study demonstrates that mobility transforms individuals, provides opportunities however, the burden of future employment continues to be significant in the lives of the students.

Ultimately, the analysis of the findings demonstrates that educational mobility of students goes beyond push-pull factors. I argue that only taking push-pull factors into account, one cannot explore and explain the complexity of mobility motivation phenomenon of students, particularly from a country with Tajikistan’s history and background. Revisiting mobility demonstrates that it is not only a physical or geographical phenomenon, but is deeper and broader, intrinsic (in terms of personal drive and development growth) as well as extrinsic. The life trajectories of students, often in rural localities, acts as a catalyst for mobility motivation within a person. I call this micro-local mobility that then leads toward trans-local and trans-national mobility. It is not only mobility that can change the life trajectories of students: the process can be a reciprocal one. The

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23 The number of population increases but the job creating remains very little in Tajikistan and therefore, because of unemployment the big number of population are in migration.
life trajectories of students can also change mobility motivation, and perception of student’s mobility.

1.7 Organization of the Study

Chapter One provides an overview of the study. It introduces the post-Soviet, post-conflict country of Tajikistan, briefly sets out the relationship between Tajikistan and Japan, and gives an introduction to student mobility. It then sets out the research questions, and briefly discusses the methodology and the main conceptual framework. It ends with identifying the significance of this study and how it adds to the body of knowledge about this region and this particular group of the population.

Chapter two focuses on the literature review, and it identifies and discusses the knowledge gap in the existing literature that pertains to this study. It begins with a broad overview of the literature on migration and mobility and discusses their relevance to the current study. It goes on discuss certain salient concepts that are used in the analyses of international education movements, including mobility, motivation, push-pull factors, experience and brain-drain in higher education. It then examines mobility and motivation in developed and developing countries and identifies the differences between them.

Chapter three focuses on the conceptual frameworks used to conduct this study. It discusses the concepts of mobility, translocality and student life trajectories and how these have been adapted to better capture and understand the complex nuances of student motivation, educational trajectories and (student) life experiences uncovered in this study.

Chapter Four focuses on the context of the research and on the relationships between Tajikistan and Japan. It provides background information about higher education in Tajikistan and discusses student motivation to study beyond the country’s borders. It establishes the centrality of context in this study.
**Chapter Five** is on methodology. It explains why I used a qualitative research approach and the attendant methods tools to conduct this research. It discusses the research participants and their backgrounds, the study of which were important in understanding their experiences of mobility. The discussion then moves to the ethical considerations of the study and touches on my own role as an insider and an outsider in the research. It concludes with setting out the limitations of the study as well as issues of generalizability and validity.

**Chapters Six** focuses on findings: what were the students’ experiences and perceptions in relation to their coming to and studying in Japan. It seeks to answer the research question: ‘what motivates Tajikistani students to study abroad in general and in particular in Japan.’ This chapter touches on personal and structural aspects that were found to be mobility motivators for students and within these macro aspects, the personally relevant so-called ‘micro’ but crucial motivators that are significant and need to be recognized. It also describes the students’ own perceptions of the changes and growth that they underwent through the mobility process and captures their reflections on their own development as individuals.

**Chapter Seven** considers research question on how have students' experiences while studying and living in Japan effected their trajectories in life. It looked at the impact of educational mobility on experiences and life trajectories of students. It discusses the main key themes that emerged from research questions such as the impact of Japan beyond the classroom, the impact of post conflict situation, the notion of personal desire (*kase shudan*) and the role of structure. There is also the discussion on employment and employability that sheds light on how it is drawn and altered. The chapter describes the impact of micro and macro factor the experience of individuals in new international arena.

**Chapter Eight**, discusses the significance of the findings, linking the data back to the conceptual frameworks used and showing how the research data both underscores the relevance of the framework in its juxtaposition of mobility, translocality and educational life trajectories,
and offers fresh, new insights into student mobility experiences that help gain a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of what is, in fact, a complex phenomenon. In doing this, it speaks to the contributions of this research as well as pointing to further areas of study that might further enrich the insights that this thesis provides. The concluding section draws together the various strands of this study together to present a more holistic approach to student educational mobility.
CHAPTER II - LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the existing literature on educational mobility. It explores the debates on motivation, and life trajectories in the field of migration, mobility, internationalization, and globalization. The chapter locates the movement of Tajikistani students within the larger literature of student mobility and translocality theory as a framework for exploring the experiences of Tajikistani students in Japan.

This chapter is divided into three sections: migration theories, motivation, and life trajectories. The first section (Section 2.2) provides an overview of general migration theories and how they have been refined over time. The next section looks at differences and similarities between student mobility motivation in developed and developing countries (Section 2.3). This facilitates a consideration of the literature on student mobility in general and in the context of Tajikistan. The third section focuses on the literature on life trajectories (Section 2.4) to explore how student mobility shapes students’ lives.

2.2 Approaches to Understand Migration Theories and Its Link to Educational Mobility

It is important to clarify the differences and similarities between migration and mobility. According to Murphy-Lejeune (2002, p.4):

Migration denotes movement outside one’s country of origin into another for a variety of reasons, leading to changes in residence and legal status. By contrast, mobility is a more general term, which applies to phenomena other than movements from one national territory to another. It emphasizes first and foremost change…Mobility is the quality of those who can easily move and adapt to different environments. It may be

24 I should acknowledge that it is difficult to provide complete exploration of educational research within speedy growing of literature but this research provides those literature that are salient for this paper.
conceived principally as a geographic condition. It may also extend into the linguistic, social, intellectual, professional, cultural domain.

In this thesis when I am referring specifically to students, the term ‘mobility’ as defined by Murphy-Lejeune, more accurately describes their situation. I focus on mobility as a geographic (moving from one geographical location to another), social (improving education, seeking for quality education, qualified teachers), intellectual (taking risks to go far distances to gain new knowledge) concept. The primary motive for mobility of students is the pursuit of education and this implies a choice student have in hand. This implies agency as well as choice. Kahanec and Kralikova (2011) show that mobility and migration motivations are different.

Koser’s (2007) explanation of migration of people draws attention to the interconnectedness of political, global, economic and social issues. Such macro level considerations have also been important for this study (Chapter 3; 4).

migration is associated with significant global events-revolutions, wars, and the rise and fall of empires; that it is associated with significant change-economic expansion, nation-building, and political transformations, and that it’s also associated with significant problems-conflict, persecution, and dispossession (Koser, 2007, p. 4).

McMahon (1992) also underscores the political considerations (scholarship provision, international assistance) that open up new alliances and play a great role in creating new mobility opportunities resulting in a pull factor for international students, as we shall see in the case of Tajikistan and Japan in Chapter 4 (Section 4.3). The movement of students is a major component of migration studies (Samers, 2010). Mobility is a concept is sometimes being studied separately and sometimes interchangeably as migration study. This study acknowledges the complex relationship of migration and mobility but applies the term mobility to understand the process of mobility of students who form a part of this research. Migration “is multifaceted and offers
multiple levels of analysis” (Kurekova, 2011, p.3). The research on mobility and migration represents attempts to explore and demonstrate various patterns and impacts of mobility. It is important to navigate through these main migration approaches and theorizations that have themselves changed, challenged and emerged anew over time.

Early migration discussions were concerned with the causes of migration. Portes (2016) stresses that examining the causes of migration, allows us to get some idea of “who migrates?” and provides some information on the causes of migration. According to Samers (2010), however, concentrating only on causes precludes locating the phenomenon with the larger context of migration. A focus on the causes of migration casts migrants as mostly an oppressed group of people and explains their movement in terms of chronic unemployment, cultural, political and social marginalization, to escape oppression, for family reunification, to break free of poor living standards, and gender expectations (Portes, 2016; O’Reilly, 2015; Samers, 2010). This perspective reduces the complexity of migration motivation and overlooks individual choices and decisions. The considerations of the causes of migration can help to recognize the challenges as well as opportunities faced by people in different periods of time and places (Portes, 2016; Samers, 2010) and focuses on what makes people move not why they move to particular locations. Only focusing on courses of migration do not help us to understand the actual experiences of migration in all its complexity and nuances nor do they take the enquiry forward to the host sites where migrant experiences continue and importantly take on new meaning. Later studies organized the causes of migration under “push-pull” factors (Portes, 2016) but the push-pull dichotomy remains mostly under economic factors (see section 2.2.1; 2.2.2) (O’Reilly, 2015).

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25 According to Oxford English Dictionary- cause described as something that produces effect or “gives rise to any action, phenomenon, or condition.” Available at http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/29147?rskey=lg79gR&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid Accessed February 24, 2018.
However, most migration studies did not focus on students. The majority of research concentrates on labor migration as a significant aspect of migration whereas studies on students as one group of migrants remains limited (King et al., 2010; Findlay, 2010).

2.2 Mobility under Econometric Lenses

Neo-classical theory remains the dominant theory in the field of migration arguing that the main rationale for migration is economic (remittances, and mobility of highly skilled migrants, mobility of poor to rich countries) (Kou & Bailey, 2014; Kurekova, 2011; Harris & Todaro, 1970). The migration of people was seen primarily as a movement of people from developing to developed countries. However, the reality is far more complex (Luthra et al., 2014). There are multiple reasons for moving countries that are not necessarily economically driven (Massey et al., 1999). Neo-classical theory was criticized as being simplistic since migration is not only from the poorest countries of the so called “global south,” to the more industrialized, and richer to the “global north” (Samers, 2010, p.5). Rather, sometimes the economic growth developing countries experience also leads to greater migration to those countries where one finds better lifestyles than in the developing world (de Haas, 2008).

World system theory offers a macro level explanation in terms of expansion of global capitalism, historical relations of power and its effect on mobility patterns with its focus on countries and nations rather than individuals and cultures (Wallerstein, 1974). Indeed, other scholars hold that economic models and unemployment studies cannot explain the phenomenon sufficiently as today both poor and rich, people from developing or developed countries are on the move (Hadler, 2006), which is also observable in the case of students.

26 “Highly skilled” is a contested term as there is not one agreed definition between scholars. Ho (2011) supports the definition of Iredale’s (2001) that a highly skilled person has tertiary level of qualification. However, I agree with Koser and Salt (1997) who explain that there is no simple way to define highly skilled: does it refer to qualifications or experience.
In fact, statistics reveal that the number of international students from developed countries such as U.S.A. increased three-fold from 71,000 in 1991/92 to 283,332 students in 2011/2012. Literature review reveals that the majority of the American student’s move to certain developing world such as Latin America, China and developed countries such as Japan. After 2011, the number of U.S. students in Japan increased from 1,264 in 2012 to 4,612 in 2016. These statistics indicate that mobility is not just from “the rest to the west” but that it is now more multidimensional. Additionally, some studies demonstrate the contribution of international students to several developed countries, which add US $24 billion (IIE, 2013) to the U.S. economy, around US $17 billion to the U.K. economy and US $21 billion to Australia’s economy (Altbach, 2013). Hence, foreign students represent a source of income for developed countries (Beine et al., 2013), adding more dimensionality to the concept of mobility.

Mobility is also a result of structural factors such as institutions that develop projects and recruit talented students (Findlay, 2010) pointing to internationalization as a global talent recruitment phenomenon (Yang, 2003). The debates demonstrate that international education is not a “value-free phenomenon” (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015) students are considered to be “economic capital” (Mol, 2013). Moreover, it is the “development of a knowledge economy and the globalization of higher education that have given rise to state policies targeting international students as prospective skilled workers” (Mosneaga, 2013, p.14).

Samers (2010) categorizes economic migration under forced migration; that is, those who face poverty and unemployment are forced to move. In the case of mobile students, they are not forced to continue their education, although their ultimate purpose is to gain better economic status. Conventional economists define labor migration as a self-regulated process linking it to

micro-frameworks (Portes, 2016; Kurekova, 2011) but labor migration movement theorists frame the study of migration in terms of family influences, arguing that migration is a family decision not an individual one (Sandel, 1977). In the study of students’ educational mobility family influence is also significant but, in some cases, families can act as a barrier for educational mobility migration such as in the case of gendered mobility. This more nuanced approach to mobility that considers micro contextual factors (see section 2.2.1.1.) such as the role of the family, for example, resonates with my thesis as it will be seen in the chapter on findings.

2.2.1 Countries and Nations: Micro and Macro Debates

Against the macro and meso and micro level debates, it is important to explore individual voices and thus to focus on the micro level (Li & Bray, 2007) because choices and agency are exercised at this level by individuals, albeit within the larger parameters discussed above. However, many scholars (Haug, 2008; Castles & Miller, 2009) argue for a multi-dimension perspective, using a combination of disciplines to consider mobility from both the social structural aspect as well as individual motives. This is significant in deepening an understanding of the migratory decisions of individuals (Bonin et al., 2008). With respect to social structures, the presence of networks also become significant. The notion of networks as Massey et al. (1987) suggest, the “migration system paradigm” which touches the aspects of the history and shows the linkages between countries and people, becomes important. Networks are considered as a mediating factor between migrant and non-migrants (Massey et al., 1987). However, these studies do not explore different levels of networking: networking is not only about being linked to friends and family but also being connected to various institutions and geographical locations. This would need further exploration.

29 In some countries male members in the family become a barrier for female members in the family.
30 The network studies also lead to the analysis of diasporic studies (Samers, 2010). Diaspora is defined as “spreading out of certain communities from an original homeland to their regrouping and the formation of new communities in a ‘new’ land” (Samers, 2010, p.95). In the case of Tajikistani students in Japan it is early yet to analyze, those students from the diasporic networks as there are not any sign of re-grouping and new communities in Japan.
approach was also closely studied by those who focus on structure and agency in the mobility process. The network approach did not go far enough to recognize the role of structure and agency working together in the issues relating to student mobility. The role of agency is prominent in the student mobility experience, as we shall see in Chapter 6 (Section 6.2.2).

My study also recognizes the process of migration as a non-linear one (O’Reilly, 2015). A Non-linear approach to migration leads to new theorization for example discussion related to transnationalism (Schiller et al., 1995). Schiller et al., argue that migration cannot be understood through simplistic terms rather it is important to understand the experiences of migrants outside of their home country through transnational theory, which will be discussed in the following section. Samers (2010, p. 85) points that “[m]igrants instead feel multiple attachments across different places” and suggests to the employment of spatial concepts for exploring causes and consequences of migration.

2.2.2 Transnationalism: Connection of National Borders

Transnationalism refers to networks, international ties and the relationships across borders and networks (Vertovec, 1999). Unlike other migration theoretical frameworks, transnationalism takes account of multiple ties and interactions of people across borders but it falls short of capturing contextual and socio-cultural aspects. Transnationalism focuses more on networks in different nation states. However, educational mobility focuses more on institutions across borders (Knight, 2016, p.36). Vertovec defines transnationalism as:

[A] condition in which, despite great distances and notwithstanding the presence of international borders (an all the laws, regulations and national narratives they represent), certain kinds of relationships have been globally intensified and now take place paradoxically in a planet-spanning yet common-however virtual-arena of activity (Vertovec, 1999, p.447).
It has to be said at the outset that the contribution of both theories is far greater than reflected by my study: I explicate only those concepts that had the most relevance to my study. I wanted to draw attention to them here as an aspect of the theoretical understandings that have underpinned this study. It has to be said that debate on transnationalism ranges wide and covers globalization, politics, cross border, internationalization (Knight, 2010) but for the purpose of this thesis I have explicated only the embeddedness of individuals across networks and different geographies (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015; Ozkul, 2012). However, we should recognize that studies on globalization grapple between global and local (Ozkul, 2012), neither globalization nor transnationalism explore deeply how individual motivations are shaped by socio-cultural aspects and agency in their localities as well as abroad. The study on Chinese immigrants to Canada also critiques that the transnational concept cannot explain movement of people from one locality to other (Yu, 2011).

Transnationalism focuses more on the idea of de-territorialized: Mitchell (1996) was concerned that it does not take account of the sense of dis-locatedness which is implicit in the notion of de-territorialization. For Mitchell, a ‘grounded’ sense of transnationalism was important to examine the spatio-temporal construction of migrants’ experiences and the ways that spaces and places were not simply in the background but played an active role in the dynamics of mobility and movement.

For my study the notion of transnationalism has some relevance as evidenced in Chapter 8 (discussion) but still does not fully capture the nuances of motivations and type of mobility of the participants I interviewed. To be able to go further back into their educational histories, it was translocality, together with the concepts of mobility and educational trajectories better framed my work (Chapter 3, Sections 3.4-3.6). The following section discusses on larger migration theories.
2.3 Locating Educational Mobility within Larger Migration Theories

Some research on educational mobility approach the subject from class-based theories for example using Bourdieu’s theory of *habitus* but this approach does not explain how, “individuals [who are coming] from diverse socioeconomic and class backgrounds have similar struggles and transitions during their study-abroad periods” (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015, p. 967). It is not possible to look at mobility issues without reference to motivation and to push-pull factors. The next section focuses on these two ideas.

Theories and concepts of labor migration were expanded to educational migration and this in turn led to a critical discussion among scholars on push-pull factors, brain drain and educational migration (Tan, 2015; Kahanec & Kralikova, 2011; Gonzalez et al., 2011; Chirkov et al, 2006; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). The situations in the home countries constitute the “push” aspect of mobility; that is, what makes students leave their home nations. The host countries generate the “pull” or attraction to a particular country (Varma & Kapur, 2013; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Altbach, 1998). The push-pull framework was used to analyze the mobility motivation of migrants but this approach was criticized for being too behavioristic and, hence, ignoring the role of structures and institutions. Moreover, push-pull factors fail to take account of the multi-local aspect of mobility including the role of students as agents. Research shows that the lack of access to higher education (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002), the poor quality of education (Lee & Tan, 1984), economic links between the home and the host countries (McMahon, 1992), “excess demand for tertiary level education” (Lee & Tan, 1984, p.687), political instability, and importance of studying in an English speaking countries (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002), as well

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31 See neoclassical economic of migration which focuses on labor migration demand and brain drain.

32 Push factors are seen in relation to home countries (related to social, political and economic forces) that initiate mobility of students. Pull factors are attributed to attractiveness of the host country (perception of students about international education, availability of programs in local borders, better understanding of the new cultural context and new opportunities).
as an inadequate supply of university places in home countries (Yang, 2007), constitute major push factors from developing to developed countries in particular.

It is the host country that generates the pull factor (Tan, 2015; Varma & Kapur, 2013). The analysis of the pull factors emphasizes the availability of educational opportunities, commonality of language, existing educational programs such as science and technology, geographic proximity to the home country, the reputation of the host country’s education, the popularity of the country such as the U.S.A. (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002), the expected benefits (such as lower educational fees, safe environment, weather) of the host country can all play a part in the decision to pursue studies ‘abroad’ and constitute pull factors. Simington’s (1989) study shows that in 1980s, the number of Chinese students for example, increased in Australian English colleges due to the promise of part-time work while being a student. Pull factors can include opportunity created by international relations and the reputation of the host country (Section 6.3.3; 6.3.4).

The reasons given by students from developing countries for moving to the U.S.A. included “location, size, safety, financial aid, quality education, better research facilities, and ease of access” (Tan, 2015, p.2). Mazzarol et al. (1997) found six key factors that influence students’ choice for a specific country: knowledge and awareness of host country, personal recommendation, cost issue, environment or climate, geographic proximity and social links. However, we should not envision host countries in overly optimistic terms (de Haas, 2012, p.10) but rather we need to understand the complexity of considerations that dictate a student’s choice of/inclination towards a specific country. Kahanec and Kralikova (2011) argue that higher education policies can also constitute an important educational mobility pull factor and Tan (2015) describes the level of institutional support as playing a key role in the mobility motivation of students.

As highlighted above, international relations also open up new mobility opportunities (McMahon, 1992). These include political factors such as changes in immigration policies,
scholarship provision, the creation of new links between host and home country universities (sometimes in order to fill the gaps created by an aging population and falling interest amongst young people to pursue higher education in their home countries) (de Wit & Ripmeester, 2013). In such circumstances international students are seen as prospective skilled immigrants (de Wit & Ripmeester, 2013).

A micro-level approach suggests that it is also important to explore the issue from a cultural and individual perspective because “cultural and social pathways including language, study, adventure and social relationships are important as the original motivation for migration” (Gilmartin & Migge, 2013, p.285). Additionally, the role of family and friends is significant in directing the selection of study in particular institutions and countries (Tan, 2015). Push and pull factors are theorized in ways that do not take into account the cultural, personal and institutional factors that are also important motivators for student’s mobility. It follows with the discussion on consequence of mobility can be a “brain drain” (Varma & Kapur, 2013, p.315) and this is discussed in the next section.

2.3.1 Brain Drain or Brain Gain and Its Link to Brain Waste

The term “brain drain” was popularized in 1950s and 1960s with the immigration of British scientists to the U.S. (de Haas, 2012; Varma & Kapur, 2013; Robertson, 2006), but in the past 10 years the phenomenon known as the brain drain issue has become a “controversial political and economic issue” (Robertson, 2006, p. 1) due to depletion of human capital (skilled workers) from the home countries (Beine et al., 2013). It is argued that international migration leads to the

34 There is also debate on the notion of brain drain meaning highly skilled professionals such as engineers, physicians, and scientists but some argue it is the migration of relatively highly educated people compared to average group of people (Beine et al., 2001). Some invest on education for the purpose of a migration opportunity (Beine et al., 2001).
35 It is also arguable the extent of which those students who come to host countries are skilled already or not.
brain drain from the developing countries (Garcia Pires, 2015). The term refers to the loss of the professional person who does not return to the home country (Garcia Pires, 2015; Varma & Kapur, 2013). Scholarly studies on brain drain have evolved over time (Varma & Kapur, 2013; de Haas, 2006), and accrued new related concepts such as brain gain (Robertson, 2006; Schiff, 2005), brain circulation (Varma & Kapur, 2013; Robertson, 2006), and brain waste (Garcia Pires, 2015).

The notion of the concepts of brain gain and brain circulation is linked to the individual for whom the educational experience constitutes a gain and to the country(ies) where such people choose to reside and work after their study. But this does not mitigate the idea of a brain drain which is connected to home countries that lose their young talented minds to the host countries who gain, and benefit from the migration of highly skilled professionals (Varma & Kapur, 2013; Beine, et al., 2013; Beine, et al., 2001; Lee & Tan, 1984).

There has been a shift from the pessimistic view of “brain drain” in 2000 to the more positive notion of a brain gain and (de Haas, 2012) “brain circulation\textsuperscript{36}” in the sense that universities are seen as preparing the “most prominent executives, entrepreneurs and inventors” (Varma & Kapur, 2013, p.216). Although, as already noted above, this gain does not override brain drain that countries might experience if their young talented students do not come back home to work. According to Schiff (2005) brain drain also carries with it certain benefits such as skills, remittances, trade and quality the skills and knowledge as being for individuals who may at some future period, return home. Remittances are also seen as “a potential development resource” which, in 1990 exceeded to US $24 billion sent to lower and middle-income countries (de Haas, 2012, p.9). In the case of Tajikistan remittances constitute 50 percent of GDP; it is labor migrants rather than governments that make up the majority of foreign aid (Castles, et al., 2014). However, it is a moot point as to who ‘does’ the gaining. Obviously, the individual benefits from their

\textsuperscript{36} Brain gain is at the individual level and it does not mitigate the concept of brain drain.
education: and there is clearly a gain for the country they then reside and work in which may well not be their home country: the studies of brain drain focus on the country of destination but de Haas (2012, p.10) is right when he argues for “empirical evidence on the mixed and strongly context dependent development impacts of migration” (italics by original author).

2.4 Motivators for Higher Educational Mobility

The simple and yet complicated questions of why students move internationally and how they explain their experience abroad have been approached from different angles and levels. Some scholars have approached it from analytical levels, for example the micro level, focusing on the role of the agent (Kupfer, 2015; Madge et al, 2015); the meso level, discussing the role of institutions or organizations (Marginson, 2014; Altbach et al.,2009; Ross, 1973); and the macro level, taking a global perspective (Marginson, 2008; Abella, 2006). Scholarly research show that students’ motivations and trajectories are influenced by domestic and international factors.

Another group of scholars’ approach mobility motivators from a behavioristic intention and goal-oriented approach (Deci et al., 1991) and they propose the theory of self-determination, which demonstrates that humans strive for competence, and autonomy (Deci et al., 1991). From this approach, scholars hold that life goals of students are influenced by human motivation. Chirkov et al. (2007, p. 205) analysis of mobility motivators contributes to the understanding of self-determination as the concept explains that it constitutes “situational objectives that are shaped by their [students’] situation in the home country [localities], relationships with families, future career goals and other conditions” that motivate students to move. This resonates with my research findings (see Chapter 7) as well. An analysis of the literature led me to the conclusion that the motivation of students from developed countries is often qualitatively different from that of students from the developing world. It is this distinction that is discussed in the following sections.
2.4.1 Motivations of Students from Developed Countries

A review of the literature appears to suggest that the motivation of students from developed and developing countries differs sufficiently and warrants consideration here. The most popular destination countries for international students globally are the U.S. and the U.K. The U.K. has fewer students studying abroad with only 33,000 and accepted 370,000 international students in 2010 (King et al., 2010). This raises the question of what kind of students from developed countries continues their education abroad. Why do students from developed countries with leading economies and universities seek to study abroad? What motivates them?

Findings by Findlay and King (2010) in the U.K., and research on the U.S. students studying abroad (McDaniel et al, 2005) yielded similar results in relation to motivation: the main motivating factors included wanting to attend a world-class university, having an adventure, taking up a good opportunity for an international career, the consideration of the importance of specific courses offered by particular universities, prohibitive high student fees in home countries, family encouragement and the availability of sandwich courses \(^{37}\) (Findlay & King, 2010; McDaniel et al., 2005). Work-based learning with references to “sandwich students” or “sandwich courses” are a significant feature of U.K. higher education (Little & Harvey, 2006).

Studies on mobility of students from developed countries find personal or intrinsic (internal personal factors) mobility factors such as intercultural understanding, world enlightenment (learning about the world and interacting with different people) (Anderson et al., 2015; Brooks & Waters, 2009; McDaniel et al., 2005; King et al., 2010). They indicate also to personal growth (increasing confidence, gaining maturity), career development (enhancing career prospects, advancing students’ knowledge in their chosen field), and searching for world class universities to be more significant.

\(^{37}\) Work based programs are called sandwich courses.
A few major points emerge from these studies about the motivation of students in developed
countries, particularly in Europe and other Western countries. Scholars emphasize the importance
of geographical proximity (King et al., 2010), academic quality and degree programs (Gonzalez et
al., 2010), history of migration (King et al., 2010), recruitment strategies (Verbik & Lasanowski,
2007), adventure (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002), programs such as ERASMUS\textsuperscript{38}(Gonzalez et al., 2010;
Verbik & Lasanowski, 2007), employability (Gonzalez et al., 2010; King et al., 2010; Kahanec &
Kralikova, 2011) and social class position (Thomas, 2015), and intercultural understanding
(McDaniel et al., 2005). What is significant here is (McDaniel, 2005) the relevance of employment
and academic knowledge that is not emphasized by students. Research studies in the U.K. (King
et al., 2010; Kind and Findlay, 2010; King & Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; Murphy-Lejeune, (2002) and
the U.S. shows that for students from the U.K and the U.S the experience of another culture and
language is more prominent. The analysis of the motivators in students of a developed country
suggests that the home context is not so much in the forefront of factors when choosing to move
to other countries to further their education. Most of the motivators are personal or intrinsic.

2.4.1.1 Motivations of Students from Developed Countries: National Policies

In the U.S.A., national leaders like Abraham Lincoln encouraged students to study abroad
to maintain the country’s competitiveness (2006 cited in Li et al., 2013). However, looking at the
ERASMUS program, it focuses on the student, and highlights that “a period spent abroad not only
enriches students’ lives in the academic and professional field” but can improve “students’
employability and job prospects” (European Commission, 2010, p.1).

Western education centers recruiting and retaining foreign skilled labor against the
decreasing and ageing population (Verbik & Lasanowski, 2007) is becoming a current strategy of

\textsuperscript{38} The ERASMUS Program is abbreviation of European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students. The
program was established in 1994 by the European Commission. Erasmus or ERASMUS both used interchangeably.
most developed countries to address ageing populations. As such, Altbach and Teichler (2001) emphasizes that one important element of mobility is the growth of the labor market. It is also important to consider how the recruitment strategies of host countries can influence students’ destination choices (Verbik & Lasanowski, 2007; Gonzalez et al., 2010; Verbik & Lasanowski, 2007) and shape migration patterns (Samers 2010, p.15). Studies on European mobility of students suggest that a greater number of females apply to study abroad than males. The reverse is true of some Asian and Central Asian countries.

Studies on student mobility in developed countries emphasize the personal desire and choices and point to family history connections\(^{39}\) as well as importance of language (Kupfer, 2015; Kind and Findlay, 2010; King & Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002, 2003).

### 2.4.2 Motivation of Students from Developing Countries

Lee and Tan (1984) focus on the students from developing countries toward advanced countries and argue that excessive demand for education is becoming a mobility motivator for the “educated elite.”\(^{40}\) McMahon (1992) studied the mobility of students from 18 developing countries\(^{41}\) and argues for a greater understanding of the historical factors. In my study the recent history of Tajikistan has been very significant in explaining why students sought to go abroad as well as the educational, social and economic context that acted as a catalyst to their decisions. In the 1960s and 1970s, students from the so-called third world moved to five industrialized countries\(^{42}\) and McMahon (1992) emphasizes the significance of economic factors and changes in the political arenas that strongly influence students’ international mobility. Cai and Loo’s (2014)...

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\(^{39}\) Gonzales et al. (2011) emphasized on the importance of an awareness zone or information as significant aspects of educational mobility.

\(^{40}\) Gu & Schweisfurth, Transnational Connections, 2015, p.948. Educated elite means that the international education was only among elites and gradually it spread to the mass.

\(^{41}\) McMahon (1992) uses the term “Third World Nations,” and this term is not used anymore because it implies a rank that countries do not accept.

\(^{42}\) Five industrialized countries such as the U.S.A., U.K, New Zealand, Australia and other European countries.
research reveals that Chinese and Indian students choose the U.K. and U.S.A. because the country prestige. However, while some research studies have focused almost exclusively on the economic aspect of educational mobility, others argue that education is the reproduction\(^{43}\) of social capital (Waters, 2006; Findlay et al., 2012). According to Li and Bray (2007) the economic perspective on this issue focuses only on the macro level but does not pay attention to the micro level. As my findings imply, the phenomenon cannot be approached only from an economic or social capital angle. The reality, given the human complexity, lies in more nuanced relationships between these and other factors and motivators.

Some studies about African students reveal that students move abroad because of lack of opportunities to develop their skills and quality education in their home country (Glaser, 1978). Some other studies show that Indian students move to escape ingrained social customs and cultural practices (e.g. the cast system) (Jeffery et al., 2005). Another study of Indian students in Australia relates to students’ motivation for the possibility of employability or gaining residency. The limited access to education and poor quality of education in the case some African universities lead students to move out (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Kuptsch & Fong, 2006). Individual decision and motivations (Bauböck et al., 2006; Shanka et al., 2005) and “cultural and social pathways-including language, study, adventure and social relationships” are significant factors influencing mobility motivators for migration (Gilmartin & Migge, 2013, p.285). There is an escape from low returns in their home country (Beine, et al., 2013). The low returns available to some in the developing world are weighed against the perceived gains to be made in the developed world, and this prompts mobility as well.

As with students in developed countries the motivations are diverse and multiple and include “students go abroad to gain a different experience, enhance their resumes, and beat their competitors for certain jobs” and “gives them transferable skills, the opportunity to travel and

\(^{43}\) Social capital produces new networks or sometimes called elite groups.
confidence” (King, Findlay & Ahrens, 2010, p.25). Rao and Hossain’s research on mobility motivators of rural Bangladeshi students reveals that individuals are motivated according to their perception about learning and how learning can situate them in their local and global contexts. Learning is seen as a convenient opportunity for those who are in a lower social hierarchy and allows individuals to acquire new knowledge and experiences that could transform their notion of self (Rao & Hossain, 2012). In both, developed and developing cases students are considered the most privileged groups of migrants or new groups of elites. In addition, studies focused on the influence of social class on higher education (HE) international student mobility (Findlay et al., 2012; Li & Bray, 2007; Nghia, 2015; Waters, 2006) and point out that the higher the social class, the greater the likelihood that students will go abroad (King et al., 2006). In the case of Vietnamese students, Nghia (2015) distinguishes between younger and older students. Younger students choose institutions based on their financial background but older students seek out the practicality of education. Research on Vietnamese students also shows the important of foreign diploma as a motivating factor (Huong & Cong 2018; Nghia, 2015). Some scholarly research on China after the one child policy found that neither occupation nor social capital were as important as the policy and the resulting low fertility changed the positions of girls. The girls in the family without brothers from rural areas were able to continue their education because of parents support and parents viewed as being the “key determinant of their children’s culture happiness” (Fong, 2002, p.1103). In the case of Muslim students, they choose specific destination countries, preferring to study in the relatively developed country of Malaysia due to cultural aspects such as availability of permitted food (Singh et al, 2014, p.463). The literature demonstrates that “the acceleration of migration,” students move to “new diversified destination” countries (Samers, 2010, p. 31), not from rest to the West but becoming multidirectional.

44 The word halal originates from Arabic word means permitted or lawful food.
45 The movement of greater number of people (Samers, 2010).
The analysis of both developed and developing countries points to different reasons, causes and push-pull factors. In developed countries, the context is not so urgent and significant a consideration as the personal desire, cultural understanding and language learning. For developing country students, context in terms of economics, scarcity of opportunity, the need to escape constraints, the urgency to improve life chances, the quality of education available in the home context – all of these come into play as well as personal desires. Paying attention to context, the section below examines educational mobility motivators of students from post-Soviet countries and outlines the changes in the pattern of post-Soviet country students, in particular Central Asian students and how the post-Soviet system affected students’ international mobility (see section 4.2) for more context background information).

2.4.3 Motivation of Students from Post-Soviet Countries

The modernization process in post-Soviet countries introduced three new terms: “access, quality and efficiency” to develop highly qualified personnel (Morgan & Kliucharev, 2012, p.3). The post-Soviet transition from communism to various forms of capitalism and the free market resulted “into one of the major human migration regions in the world” (Marat, 2009, p.1). With the collapse of the Soviet system the education system was also required to “re-adjust …[or] to survive in the new…conditions” (Morgan & Kliucharev, 2012, p.3). The slow pace of reform in these countries and in Tajikistan in particular (see Chapter 4 on Context) may be another factor for student mobility as the quality of education declines and changes for improvement are implemented slowly.

Within post-Soviet countries, economic, social and political lives are not uniform. Studies shows that the motivation of students from Russia lies primarily in cultural reasons; for example, to learn the language and visit different countries in line with the motivation of students from developed countries and social motives (upward mobility) is linked to developing countries (Bokareva, 2014). In turn their upward mobility can positively contribute to well-being of
individuals (Sabzalieva, 2012). The literature analysis also points to the role of foreign actors and their strategies within the Central Asian region that constitutes an emerging key pull factor for students to host countries. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 (Section 4.3).

The higher education mobility in Central Asian countries is concurrent with the rise of an aspirational middle class46 since 1991. For some scholars, the middle classes seem to offer a channel to promote development. It is believed that middle-class families’ value the accumulation of human capital47 but some researchers maintain that education remains the purview of the ‘elite’. The question of expansion of education from selective access to what is considered to be “elite” to all young people (as was the case in Soviet times) as mentioned by Martin Trow (1974) seems to be grappling between the idea of universalization or keeping higher education more exclusive. In reality, equal opportunity remains distant from the life of many students as many struggles to enter global higher education while some acquire it easily through connections.

Migration in the field of higher education in some post-Soviet countries did not attract the attention of policy makers, curriculum designers and researchers (Ruziev & Rustamov, 2016; Mertaugh, 2004; Kaufman, 1994). Instead, educational ministry officials controlled educational reforms (Monobayeva & Howard, 2015).

In post-Soviet Central Asian countries, higher education mobility is also connected to the process of transition from the Soviet socialist system to a neoliberal or a market economy system. Degu (2005, p.130) argues that it may take time for leaders to “recognize … failures or success of an education …and its implementation” in post-conflict countries. There is very little research conducted on the field of education on post-Soviet countries. In particular there is lack of research

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46 Research studies have shown that the highest number of HE students come from middle-class families, defined loosely as those who have “…salaried jobs, a greater propensity for migration, has few children, invests more in health, nutrition and schooling” (ADB, 2010, see Wilmoth, 2011, p.6).

47 Banerjee and Duflo (2008) discuss the importance of middle class in the promotion of development (cited in ADB 2010, p.4). But according to income distributions, only 10% of Tajikistan’s population falls under the middle-class label, which earn US $2-4 per day. Almost 78% of the population earns below US $2 per day (USD 1.25) (ADB, 2014, p.16).
on countries which experienced a civil war either within or beyond the Soviet Union (Niyozov & Bahry, 2006). Studies on post-conflict countries postulate that:

Little attention is paid to educational reform. Much more attention has been paid to political and economic reforms in these situations. Whenever educational reform as part of post-conflict development is considered, major decisions are taken for political and economic reasons. Education on its own merit has rarely been taken seriously. (Degu, 2005, p. 130).

Thieme et al. (2013, p. 1) argue that the main motivation for Kyrgyzstani students to study abroad is because of the “quality of education, better job opportunities…to study certain disciplines not taught in Kyrgyzstan [and]…a chance to visit other places and escape from local norms such as early marriage.” This does not feature in the motivation of those from developed countries and while some may be seeking to escape difficult or uncomfortable situations at home, these do not appear to be genderised as they seem to be in Central Asia. Most Kyrgyzstani students who study abroad hope that their education will help them to find jobs abroad or international jobs in Kyrgyzstan. Research studies in Kazakhstan reveal that the old system is continuing in higher education alongside new international programs (Monobayeva & Howard, 2015). The poor quality of education, the “widespread practice of inflating grades,” the challenges “to correct the inadequacies of the past” (Kaufman, 1994, p. 151) and present issues constitute indirect key factors for mobility.

In the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet System in Tajikistan (see Sections 1.1.1; 4.1.3), the political disruption resulted in the lower attendance of students (at educational establishments) because of poverty and security reasons (Silova, 2011; Mertaugh, 2004). In the case of Tajikistan, the poverty is continuing particularly in the rural areas. Although Tajikistan attained

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48 The research by Monobayeva and Howard (2015) reminds of the saying that “only the cover was changed but the pages remain the same.”
99 percent literacy rate in Soviet times, the current education system failed to maintain those standards and to improve students’ skills. The majority of students have become unskilled labor migrants. However, as already mentioned, “political leaders may not recognize the failure or success of the education system … and its implementation”; they would rather focus on immediate results (Degu, 2005, p.130). The attitudes to education is almost the same in the most post-conflict areas. Hence the literature on education in post-Soviet countries mostly focuses on the collapse of the political system, and then speaks to technical issues such as the lack of textbooks, issue of language, issue of new curriculum, nationalizations and policies (Silova, 2012; Silova et al., 2007).

2.4.4 Motivation of Students from Developed and Developing Countries

According to the literature analysis above, changing societies and standards of the society encourages individuals to make choices on their education. Mostly, scholars locate the search for better education or investment on education as “an alternative to finding a better-paid job” (Anghel, 2014). Students see development and “asserting themselves in the society by the means of education” (Anghel, 2014, p.22). However, despite similarities on what motivates students from developed and developing countries there are some different factors between developed and developing countries that in turn shape mobility motivators. Students from developed countries are mostly motivated by cultural factors while in developing countries students are pushed by economic and socio-political factors. However, this research will demonstrate later (see Chapter Findings) that the differences between developed and developing countries’ mobility are about better quality of education, and quality of life. As do other students, students from developing countries move to other areas to improve their knowledge, and to enter into the global knowledge labor society.
2.5 Students’ Life Trajectories

Because the mobility of students in Tajikistan is literally a life changing phenomenon, (see Chapter Findings 7) we need to examine the literature on how research on life trajectories has been conducted. This research does not follow the course of the full life trajectory but confines itself to “education life trajectories.” Nevertheless, I wanted to examine the literature on life trajectories to see what light it could shed on my own research. Studies on student experiences and life trajectories indicate how students view international education opportunity and how educational opportunity affects their personal and professional life trajectories. According to Linda George (1993) there are intersections between life trajectories, life course49 and transition. The research approached life trajectories by simply looking at the impact of study abroad (Hadis, 2005), the effect of study-abroad (Thomilson, 1991), and trajectories and experiences abroad (Langenkamp, 2011). Most such studies underline the positive impact of international education on attitudes and perceptions such as global-mindedness, intellectual growth and personal development (Hadis, 2005; Carlson & Widman, 1988). Studies find that those who have spent significant time abroad gained international intercultural understandings (Carlson & Wildaman, 1988).

In understanding the experiences of students abroad, it is important to explore time, space (country and university prestige) and the individual’s interests or goals. The pursuit of international education is seen as “a rationale life strategy” for migration and employment (King et al., 2010, p. 7). According to Samers (2010, p.5) students are “a comparatively privileged group of migrants.”50 Studies show that students who aim to convert their student visas to permanent-resident visas are theorized as “student switchers” (Robertson, 2011, p.103).

49 Life course is different from life span as life course indicates a social phenomenon but life span refers to duration of human life (George, 1993, p. 358).
50 Compared to low-income immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers (Samers, 2010).
Beck’s 2004 findings show that international education assists students to find and follow international careers instead of leading them back toward their national labor market. International education becomes another big dream and staircase to advance future goals, which resonates with my research.

Dessoff (2006) suggests that mobility promotes employability. But some would argue that accumulation of international education does not have a direct relationship to future career development but rather it is dependent on how institutions prepare students (Matherly, 2010; Ahalii, 2010). Geddie (2013) argues that the graduation from international university is not only a transition in their career and migration trajectories but also change in their familial responsibility. The study of life trajectories also demonstrates the nonlinearity of individual life course and allows individuals to create “sub-identities” rather than one identity (Bochaver et al., 2017, p.223).

Finally, in understanding students’ life trajectories some researchers examined the role of hope through goal-directed thinking that was proposed by Snyder (1989). Hope theory also demonstrates the connection of hope and agency and at the same time hope was identified as the important predictor of future academic achievements (Gallagher et al., 2017).

2.5.1 Student Life Trajectories: Competing Needs for Survival

Research in developing countries shows that it is political situation and family perceptions about the importance of education that encourages more young adults to invest in education that could bring positive results (Anghel, 2014). This is particularly so in developing countries where the context of their lives has a major bearing on student’s mobility motivation. Mostly, in the developing countries the desire for bringing positive change is connected with social and economic aspects (Olwing & Valentin, 2015, p.252). However, research conducted by Porter et al. (2011, p. 405) in Ghana find that, “despite the positive discourse around education as a
precursor to the development of alternative family livelihoods, this is very commonly outweighed by the negative reality of competing needs for survival at home.” In the case of Ghana, mobility is often seen as an escape by students from their difficult situations (Porter et al., 2011).

The life histories reveal that students’ struggle is not only for education but it is geographical and social (because of poverty) as well and sometimes that includes gendered roles (Olwing & Valentin, 2015). Yet in some contexts mobility is seen through gendered lenses; that is, young people, particularly sons, are expected to input more substantially into household income as compared to the household’s daughter(s) (Porter et al., 2011). However, unequal investment in education, concerning daughters in the family, results in less substantial change being ushered into in the household production and reproduction (Porter et al., 2011, p.407) as well as society at large.

2.5.2 Life Trajectories: The Post-Study Choices

From a livelihood trajectories perspective, mobility can generate benefit if there is a change on perception and norms regarding roles of male and female in the family (Porter, et al., 2011). Impact on employment and employability also becomes a significant factor in the mobility motivators of developing country students. The importance for the context they come from is ironically made clear in their choices at the end of their studies. Those who study abroad become more confident on the life decisions and in terms of having clear objectives (Olwing & Valentin, 2015). A recent study on Chinese students in Japan shows that the motivation of students is “educationally channeled (into) international labor migration” and seen as a “side-door for cheap labor” (Liu-Farrer, 2011; Beine et al., 2013). Liu-Farrer (2011) also shows that students from developing countries tend to stay in the host country upon graduation to become valuable human resource for host countries. This could be because their skills are not valued in their home countries and choose to live in the host country (Beine, Noel & Ragot, 2013). International
education is therefore a *de facto* means for labor migration from developing countries (Liu-Farrer, 2011). At the same time, it is important to recognize the impact of the ‘new’ context (host country):

Movement to a new land necessitates adapting to new cultures, norms of behavior, and rhythms of work. Creative strategies are used that involve moving across formal and informal learning opportunities that, in combination, contribute to securing livelihoods and gaining status within one’s community [refereeing to their home country] (Rao & Hossain, 2012, p. 418).

Mobility is part of change and transition; however, the change and transition can result in different outcomes. One such outcome is “loss of social relationships” (Langenkamp, 2011, p.503). These events of moving from school to school or one location to another have “enduring impacts upon the self, such as the resonance of educational opportunity” and these events are connected to particular spaces, places and localities (Conradson & McKay, 2007, p.167). The movement or mobility of people provides new opportunities to express feelings, emotions and selfhood either positively or negatively (Sheller & Urry, 2006). This is true for students from both developed or developing countries. In the case of students from developing countries, their educational life trajectories are not only to receive material means but to change their occupation and living modes (Olwing & Valenting, 2015).

Scholars (see Sandell, 2007; Waters, 2005; Hadis, 2005; Ginsberg, 1992; Carlson & Widaman, 1988; Thomilson, 1991; Coehlo, 1964; Abrams, 1960) reveal that their international student experiences create positive changes in students’ broader acquisition of international perspectives, global mindedness, personal development, broadening the basis of self-esteem, cultural understanding of others and other countries, cultural capital, intellectual development and language development. Some students might have some negative experience because of the time
it takes them to understand the host culture (Liu, 2011). There is great diversity in international students’ mobility (Kandiko & Weyers, 2013) that also impacts their trajectories in life.

2.6 Summary

The chapter examined the literature on student mobility and found that there is lack of such literature in the post-conflict countries of the Soviet Union. The chapter began with a discussion of migrant theories in general and their relevance or otherwise for student mobility. It examined migration theories and discovered that students’ migration is under-researched. It looked at mobility factors as complementary to migration factors and discussed motivations, push-pull factors, and brain drain and brain gain implications. An examination of student educational mobility literature revealed that while there is much research conducted on the educational reform, policy and the challenges encountered by educational institutions, there is not enough research at the individual level, on students’ perceptions and on educational mobility, as yet.

It then went on to speak about and to distinguish between mobility motivators for students in the so called developed and developing countries. The literature analysis found that student mobility is best understood through a consideration of personal choice and ability (both intellectual and material) and, crucially in the case of developing countries and countries of the former Soviet Union, the importance of the home context as well as role of family. The motivation of students is not disconnected from political, social and economic structures, and this is more significant in post-Soviet, post-conflict countries. With this in mind, the chapter also examined the literature on life trajectories that become important in understanding student

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51 Studies on higher education mobility are much more advanced in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan as compared to three other Central Asian countries (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan).
mobility and experiences in their home and host countries. The next chapter gives a more detailed account of the context of the study.
CHAPTER III-CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by briefly examining conventional theories of migration and mobility and their relevance to this thesis. It focuses on the three concepts that frame and structure this study: translocality, mobility (including related discussions on brain drain and brain waste) and life trajectories. Current literature does not offer an adequate theoretical basis for the motivators, the educational life trajectories and the Tajik student experience from the home to the host country of Japan. In this chapter I unpack the three core concepts and look at the interplay between the macro (national and international) factors influencing student decisions relating to mobility) and the micro factors (student motivation, student educational trajectories, family and agency). The chapter concludes with several disparate elements within the core concepts that have been drawn together to provide a conceptual framework that has guided the key areas of investigation.

3.2 International Education through the Migration and Mobility Lens

As discussed in Chapter 2, there are no grand theories of migration.\textsuperscript{52} In analyzing the relevance of this study, this chapter focuses on the micro-level, on actual student experiences and their perception on life changes (rather than examining student mobility as a quantitative macro phenomenon of the movement of students within and beyond Eurasia and Central Asia) while being cognizant of the macro contextual factors\textsuperscript{53} that framed their choices and decisions.

Sometimes the terms migration and mobility are used interchangeably but Murphy-Lejeune (2002) explains that migration refers to the movement of people from one national territory to

\textsuperscript{52} Castles (2010) argues that it is not even desirable to think of singular theory of migration.  
\textsuperscript{53} Contextual factors are significant in mobility motivation of students such as macro (families, friends, remittances) and macro (programs, public and private institutions).
another for many reasons (asylum seekers, refugees, labour migrants, tourists, students) that usually culminate in a change of residence, status and citizenship. He contends that mobility, on the other hand, is described as a change rather than an event: geographic, linguistic, social, intellectual, professional and cultural. However, patterns of mobility are also changing (Moret, 2017; Beine, et al., 2013) to the student-turned-migrants phenomenon (Robertson, 2008). Most studies on migration are quantitative and compare the movement of people from one destination to the other (Chankseliani, 2017) but these debates reduce contextual factors to simply “push-pull,” “brain drain” and econometric considerations that do not show how students respond to their host country. I wanted to explore the motivation behind students wanting to seek further education abroad, their experiences in their home and host countries and their perceptions of how these experiences have changed their lives.

However, the reality and experience of mobility is far more complex than currently explained by push-pull, brain drain factors and movement from nation state to international settings. These concepts are important in that they help to explain not just why students move but why they choose to go where they do. My inquiry extends to further interrogation of the mobility phenomenon by bringing together the concepts of translocality, mobility and educational trajectories in the new host country context. Before discussing translocality, the following section explores other aspects and concepts that are linked to mobility.

### 3.3 Mobility: Going Beyond Physical Aspects

Educational mobility is a complex topic and is approached by scholars from various fields including the social sciences, economics, human geography, political science and sociology. Notably, mobility goes beyond the tidy world of disciplines and specifically migration mobility is multi-faceted, having cultural, economic, political, and social dimensions” (Samers, 2010, p.5). Educational mobility incorporates many different concepts such as push-pull, brain drain, brain
gain, skilled migration and frameworks such as development, transnational education, globalization and internationalization.

The educational mobility phenomenon describes the movement of people from educational, economic, political and social structures and links student mobility to the broader themes of globalization\textsuperscript{54} and internationalization\textsuperscript{55} of education (see Sheller, 2011; Rizvi, 2011; Varghese, 2008; Teichler, 2004; Knight, 2003; Umakoshi, 1997).

An important aspect of mobility is not just related to the choice of destinations but also crucially tied to the contexts that students come from. I was interested not just in where the students went but where they come from both literally and metaphorically.\textsuperscript{56} I suspected that their mobility decisions were inextricably linked to their local contexts both geographical and social (family circumstances, whether they come from rural or urban backgrounds). The process of educational mobility is “a complex and dynamic process in which macro, meso and micro-sociological levels [are] interrelated” (Kupfer, 2015).

Each discipline views the mobility phenomenon from their lenses and contributed to different conceptualization of educational mobility as “certain theories function more effectively in certain systems… [and are] supported by empirical research” (Kupfer, 2015, p.18).

My conceptualization of mobility is closely aligned with that offered by Rao and Hossain, that academic mobility “carries a symbolic significance” (Rao & Hossain, 2012, p.417). Mobility is not just the physical move from rural to urban, urban to international settings but is broader than that, it is personal, from undergraduate to graduate level and from one language context to

\begin{footnotes}
54 Globalization defined “as the process of integration via movements of goods, capital, labor, and ideas” (Bloom, 2004, cited in Kandiko & Weyers, 2013) or it is “the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, and ideas… across borders” (Knight, 2003, p.3).

55 Internationalization “is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or deliver of postsecondary education” (Knight, 2003, p.2).

56 It means position or situation not just locality.
\end{footnotes}
another. For the purpose of this study, additional relevant concepts were explored and will be discussed in the following section.

3.3.1 Voluntary and Involuntary Mobility

This section addresses the aspect of mobility of people influenced by socio-political and cultural contexts and signals the processes of social change (Eastmond, 2007) in the lives of students. Migration studies describe the terms voluntary mobility as planned and involuntary mobility as forced (Samers, 2010; Ioser, 2007). It is difficult to draw a distinction between voluntary and non-voluntary migrants (Kymlicka, 1995). Research shows (see Koser, 2007; Kymlicka, 1995) that it is not as simple as it might seem to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary migration. One could argue that the slave trade, the displacement of people either internally or externally, and the movement of people as a result of natural disasters is involuntary. The issues could be explained through a humanistic rather than a political approach although these two terms are politically loaded:

The focuses on voluntariness is important because it looks at migration from the point of view of the migrants themselves and takes them into account as agents, rather than passive recipients of benefits or of distributions of resources and opportunities (Ottonelli & Torresi, 2013, p.789).

Involuntary mobility defined as, “relocation against the migrant’s will and intention” or displacement without will of migrant (Kleist, 2017). The notion of relocation contains socio-political and economic meaning. This study is concerned with agency and the findings demonstrate that even where it would appear that agency cannot be exercised, for example with involuntary mobility, it is present. As the findings suggest (Chapter 6; 7), “past experiences are always remembered and interpreted in the light of the present” thus adding and concurring with that “culture is thus central to lived experiences.” Eastmond (2007, p.252) ‘Voluntary’ denotes
agency and here I focus on the experiential aspect of voluntary and involuntary mobility that in turn affects life trajectories of students. When students move, their local spaces move (they bring with them the concerns of family and values) with them in a sense they bring their family circumstances to the host country and to do this, I needed to use mobility and translocality concepts. The next section talks about push-pull factors.

3.3.2 Push-pull Factors

The debates on push-pull factors generally apply to the macro level (Hadler, 2006) and meso level but the key question is the reasons for moving or migrating. The essential question is whether a desire to move is motivated by everyday experiences or by looking beyond the contextual factors that catalyze people movement. Push-pull factors look at the interaction of the macro contexts from both sending and receiving countries but they miss the subtle nuances of motivation and individual and family choices based on cultural values other than economic gain. These factors are limited and therefore I use push-pull factors for my study as a lens to look at the contexts of country to country relationships which are important to frame student’s movements. However, these concepts alone do not explain the phenomenon that this thesis is exploring (student experience). When analyzing the push factor closely, studies on the phenomenon often only emphasize the negative reason for moving. However, personal desire and resilience also have a role in the decision making.

3.3.3 Brain Waste Concept

The “brain drain” concept focuses on the macro level aspects of political and economic conditions (Robertson, 2006) and considers mostly the depletion of the skilled worker force from the host country (Beine, et al., 2013). However, “brain waste” is a concept advanced by Garcia Pires (2015) who argues that the skilled workers can face ‘brain waste’ if they cannot find jobs
aligned to their professional level and end up in an unskilled job in their host countries. Schiff’s (2005) research revealed Caribbean doctors working as taxi drivers in the U. S. Other scholars (Garcia Pires, 2015; Mattoo et al., 2008; Schiff, 2005) also discuss the notion of brain waste in the host country. Alternatively, my thesis concurs with others and adds to that - ‘brain waste’ can occur in home countries too, for those students returning home. Thieme et al. (2013) found that in Kyrgyzstan the lack of job opportunities for students resulting in unemployment. These debates call for more “contextualized, relational and translocal perspective” (Benz, 2014). Having discussed push-pull, brain drain and brain waste the following section will discuss the relevance of students-turned-migrants.

3.3.4 Student Switchers: Students-Turned-Migrants

The concept of student switchers is an important one in my thesis. Due to new policies and need for skilled migrants, the notion of “student-turned-migrant” also become significant in the scholarly debates at the macro-level. The macro context gives scope for students to exercise agency to switch from being students to being migrants. This phenomenon looks at the integration of students into the migrant labor workforce (Robertson, 2008). International education is seen as a channel for labor migrations and students are skilled migrants for host countries (Robertson, 2011; Liu-Farrer, 2009). “Switching” policies demonstrate the role of host country governments in affecting the mobility and trajectories of students. New policies in Australia created alternate channels for a switch from student to migrant status. Following the policy change, the ‘student switcher’ phenomenon played a significant role on students’ trajectories and lived experiences with the prospect of being able to apply for permanent residency (PR) in Australia post graduation (Robertson, 2011). The students-turned-migrant concept focuses on the host country policies, however, Castles et al. (2014) argue that migrants will return home if there are reforms that empower migrants in their home country and can extend to a personal desire to build their career.
in home countries rather than host country. I have explored and discussed above, three main concepts related to student mobility a) mobility; b) translocality, c) educational trajectories. In doing so, I have established that all three are important contributors to my study but that on their own, they do not make visible the complexity of context, of students’ lived lives and experiences in their home and host contexts and of the micro and macro influences the exercise of agency. Similarly, Grainer and Sakdaporlak (2013) by connecting mobility with networks, places, localities, travel, and flows create a sense of the personal nature of mobility. The following sections discuss on the relevance of translocality as a conceptual framework that was used in understanding student’s mobility.

3.4 Translocality

This study uses translocality as a lens through which to examine and make sense of student mobility choices and experiences. Conradson and McKay (2007, p.168) posit that the term translocality, “…recognizes that localities continue to be important as source of meaning and identity for mobile subjects; at the level of human experience, the distinctiveness of place is retained rather than eroded by global migration flows.”

The discussion around translocality and the importance of localized phenomenon of mobility emerged in 1990s, and challenged the transnational approach (Appadurai, 1990; Guarnizo & Smith, 1998; Olwig, 1997). For Appadurai (1995) translocality means the social and cultural connection of migrants. The concept of translocality enables the locating of the research in a specific context and time. As Rizvi (2005) argues, most studies tend to explain international education through a universalizing approach that cannot address particular cultural, historical and political contexts.

The term translocal suggests that social units span over spaces. Peth (2014) defines translocality as a non-linear process which can produces strong connections between different
places as well as people’s networks. He further explains that “translocality is not volatile and not necessarily a result of specific preconditions, such as migration, flows of goods, information, and values. However, there are context-specific conditions that enable the emergence of translocality.”

Translocality,” on the one hand, means spatial mobility and on the other hand, physical, political, social and cultural spaces and localities that are shaped by it (Bromber, 2013, p.63).

The concept of translocality recognizes the groundedness of individuals and this notion can be conceived as applicable to the relationship between students and their home countries. Students remain connected through their family networks, cultural factors that continue to guide them in the host country. Translocality is not only about space but it also speaks to connections, which anchors the transnational life of students (Sinatti, 2009). Conradson and Mckay (2007) hold that translocality better explains the connection of students with their localities and better captures cultural norms that are significant for students while being abroad. I concur with this approach: there are multiple continuities for students with their families and friends in their home context as we shall discuss in the findings Chapters 6-7.

A translocality lens that considers geographies as well as community and cultural connections constitutes a more holistic lens for examining student motivation for and experience of mobility. I posit in this study that the concept needs to be further extended to take account of micro-contexts which come into play for students seeking to further their education as we shall see in Chapters 7-8 (Findings and Discussions). Brickell and Datta (2011) point out that unlike transnationality, translocality is, “[…] seen as a way of situating earlier de-territorialized notions

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of transnationalism which focused largely on social networks and economic exchanges. Translocality takes an ‘agency oriented’ approach to transnational migrant experiences” (Brickell & Datta, 2011, p.3).

My study argues that agency is the main factor validating this conceptualization of translocality and also a central aspect of the students’ life trajectories as evidenced in Findings Chapters 6-7. As scholars debate the notion of translocality contributes to connectedness instead of placeless of individuals (Lund & Johannes, 2014; Bromber, 2013). Place become an important aspect as it plays a role on “formation of migrant selfhood” (Conradson & McKay, 2007, p.169). My thesis is best served by the use of the term ‘translocal' because it focuses not only on ‘local’ but also the “way that people, ideas and localities relate to one another in social practice” (Schroder & Stephan-Emmrich, 2016, p.421). Perhaps, the definition that most resonates with my thesis is that of Schroder and Stephan-Emmrich as it encompasses both mobility and student’s mobility. However, we need to look further and consider also students’ life trajectories.

The translocality lens serves to understand and “pay attention to their [people] multiple and hybrid histories, their politics, and social construction, their material geographies and their connection to other scales and places” (Brickell & Datta, 2011, p.6) because translocal points to “multiple emplacement or situatedness both here and there” (Schroder & Stephan-Emmrich, 2016, p. 423). It is to say that all activities are influenced by “layered” practices (Madge et al., 2007) in specific context. As emphasized by Brickell and Datta (2011, p6) “places are not inert recipients of migrants, but social actors are constituted by their interrelationships with, and their groundedness in, particular places.”

What is significant is that translocal views mobility of individuals as place-based not as being uprooted from their home (Brickell & Datta, 2011, Oakes & Schein, 2006) implying that location is dynamic, not bounded. However, here it is important to emphasize that the dynamism of a place is also connected to the person; dynamism of place is not detached from the person.
The notable element of translocality is that it is seen as a “process and as a practice,” an absence and a presence, to ground our understanding in specific context in the process of globalization and “reframe as well as representing cultural assumptions” (Coleman & Collins, 2011).

Although, students are absent from one particular locality they still have presence through their ideas, imagined life, connection and communication with their previous locality which is called home.58 Discussion directs that the idea of Coleman and Collins (2011) resonates with my interpretation of, “any ‘object’ of study is always-already connected with ‘objects’ elsewhere” or locations connected to social and cultural life of people. This interpretation of translocality comes closer to my conception which is “grounded” in the cultural and familial values that guide the individual's choices and their actions. Their agency in their home and host countries is rooted in the values that have shaped their lives and continue to influence their sense of themselves and their own personal development as further elaborated in my findings chapter in the discussion of Kase Shudan ‘being a shaper of one's own destiny.’ Other studies suggest that interconnections are multi-dimensional and mobile people are rooted somewhere, they are not de-territorialized (Brickel, 2011; Mitchell, 1996). Therefore, the concept of translocality significantly contributes to an understanding of how decisions are made and how students are responded to their lives in different contexts.

3.4.1 Contextual Consideration

As discussed in the Chapter 2, most studies do not pay attention to the context from which students come. Looking at context allows one to explore and understand what made it possible for certain students to make certain choices. Translocality, while it takes account of most things, implies context rather than focusing on it explicitly. Hence, for this study I make explicit what

58 There is great number of research focuses on the notion of “home” and how migrants relate their experience with home which is the indicator of connection of multiple locations.
may be implied in translocality by arguing that the home context as well as the host context is important. Context is viewed through a micro lens (family, gender, language, culture, desire) and a macro lens (policies, international relations, international and local institutions). Both micro and macro factors significantly affect the decisions and trajectories of students. It is the students’ “interest in international education” as well as “programs and provider mobility” that influence students’ mobility (Knight, 2012, p.23).

While translocality and the larger migration and mobility theories including push and pull factors serve to contribute to an understanding of student mobility in Tajikistan, an aspect of mobility experience that these concepts fail to consider is the life trajectories of students. Students mobility is not, as it is often treated as being, an event; it is a process influenced, as the theories suggest, by the macro and micro contexts, by culture, locality, family amongst other considerations. Translocality implies connections that transcends time and space: for this thesis it is important also to examine time and space in terms of life trajectories which precede the decision to go abroad for further studies. I would posit that mobility is embedded in the factors outlined above and also in life trajectories.

3.5 Trajectories: Life Trajectories and Educational Trajectories

My notion of life trajectories for this study focuses on the importance of educational considerations, not on an individual’s entire life. There are clear links between translocality and mobility: although micro and macro-level contexts affect students’ mobility choices, translocality grounds them while abroad to their home spaces. However, context also influences life trajectories which in turn affect student mobility choices and opportunities. A life course is a personal biography that consists of social and historical factors (George, 1993). George (1993) holds that life trajectories and transition are the key and interlinked aspects of life course. However, there is a difference between life transitions which refers to change in status that could
happen over a long time period and life trajectories is a key concept that deals with stability and change in an individual’s life through multiple transitions (George, 1993). George (1993) posits that transitions are embedded in life trajectories. The latter is also connected to the student-turned-migrant phenomenon. Most studies on migration and mobility trajectories “slice the migration experiences.” Instead, they should look “at migration as a continuum consisting of multiple gradually realized trajectories.” (Ho, 2011, p.118). Ho (2011) emphasizes the role of the structures (policies and institutions) on changing the trajectories of students. However, transitions
could be: imposed ones in the macro-level (pos-Soviet, post-conflict transition), transitions out of choice (rural-rural, rural-urban, Soviet to independent, public to private, local to international). The two terms are interchangeably used in this thesis. In this process they also undergo transition themselves (the idea of “kase shudan” as a phenomenon related to growth). For my conceptual framework, I draw from the three concepts and locate my study in the spaces where they overlap. The diagram below captures this more succinctly. The conceptual framework for this study is shown in Figure 3.1 and sets out the relationships and connections of micro and macro-level factors that affected motivations as well as educational trajectories of students.

59 Although, transitions have other meanings but here I use it as synonym for mobility.
3.1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework demonstrates the link between translocality, mobility and life trajectories of students set against a backdrop of contextual and international factors. Viewed in this way, the complexity of the mobility experiences of students who come from Tajikistan to Japan is uncovered and made visible.

3.6 Summary

The chapter has discussed how mobility, translocality and life trajectories are connected and why these three concepts are key for understanding Tajikistani student experiences. This interconnectedness illuminates the “why and how’s” of different theoretical streams to explore mobility choices and trajectories of students. The first argument is that mobility cannot be explained without looking at push-pull, brain drain, brain waste, and voluntary and involuntary mobility. However, looking at them separately does not adequately explain the complexity of human and student’s mobility motivations and trajectories. When viewed through a collective
lens, the significance of decisions, motivations and experiences of students in home and host countries is made apparent. The second argument that I make in this chapter is related to the notion of transnationality and demonstrates that in order to understand the connection of students with their home countries, the translocal concept is proposed. The term, ‘translocal’ contends that transnational migrants or students who have moved abroad to further their education are connected to their families and friends in the localities in their home countries. What is elucidated from the discussion of translocality and mobility is that context is significant and it plays a role in shaping students trajectories. Finally, it is proposed that individual and also structures impact student’s mobility and trajectories in life.

This chapter explored salient concepts related to mobility, namely: a) mobility; b) translocality and c) educational life trajectories and concludes that while translocality and mobility can explain motivation of students, life trajectories need to explain student’s educational trajectories. The chapter explains how the concepts are adapted and brought together in a conceptual framework that underpins this enquiry. The following chapters look at context, methodology, findings, discussion and conclusion through combining empirical data and theoretical concepts.
CHAPTER IV – CONTEXT

4.1 Introduction

This chapter delineates the context in which students make mobility choices. It begins by looking at the macro context of Tajikistan, with a brief look at its history as a part of Central Asia and the Soviet Union and traces its move to independence via a devastating civil war. The chapter explores the impact of these changes at the societal level and thence to the micro level of the student. In looking at the micro level, the chapter explores the cultural, familial and personal factors that influence mobility choices.

In this chapter, the focus will be on the collapse of the Soviet Union and the civil war of Tajikistan, and how it influenced the country’s internationalization⁶⁰ and its people’s mobility. The chapter examines the sociopolitical situation of the country and its link to educational mobility. It will also focus on the increasing trend toward mobility in the arena of internationalization of higher education. We begin by taking a brief look at educational mobility in pre-Soviet times before focusing on the Soviet period and the current situation.

4.1.1 Tajikistan: Snapshot

The total population of Tajikistan reached 9,000,000 million (see Figure 4.1).⁶¹ Of this, the number of male members exceeds the number of female members by 1.2%. The male population is not only statistically higher; domestic and international mobility for education is also more

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⁶⁰ According to Knight (2012, p.2) “Internationalization at the national, sector, and institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education.” Internationalization and globalization are often used as interchangeable concepts but Altbach clearly draws a boundary between globalization and internationalization. For him globalization is “economic, political, and societal forces” (Altbach & Knight 2007:290).

⁶¹ Based on data from World Bank, the population of Tajikistan was around 8,700,000 in 2017. However, because it does not provide detailed information on gender, information from 2015 will be provided in figure 3.1. But, May 26 population of Tajikistan reached to 9,000,000 million population. Available at https://www.ozodi.org/a/tajikistan-population-reached-9-million/29251868.html Accessed May 26, 2018.
common among males than among females as the figure below shows. In Tajikistan, young people comprise 35% of the population.\textsuperscript{62} Between 2014 and 2015, people aged 20 to 49 were found to make up 43.8 percent of the population. According to statistics, 72% of Tajikistan's population\textsuperscript{63} lives in rural areas.

**Figure 4.1 Population of Tajikistan**

![Population graph of Tajikistan](image.png)


### 4.1.2 Overview of Tajikistan: Collapse of the Soviet Union

The collapse of the Soviet Union challenged the established system of values, creating a shift away from collectivism towards individualism. This disintegration was not only economic and political; it was also an ideological collapse which changed the trajectories of people's lives. People once were taught to practice collective values through organized systems and institutions such as the ideology of “real communism” (Turaeva, 2016, p.38). The states support for its citizens vanished overnight which impacted the motivation for mobility. Access to quality education and employment thereafter were no longer guaranteed by the state and this affected the

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\textsuperscript{62} Statistical Yearbook, Statistics Agency under the president of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2015.

\textsuperscript{63} Statistical Yearbook, Statistics Agency under President of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2015.
economic and social status of the people and made educational provision uneven, in quality and sometimes in accessibility. In Tajikistan, the issues created by the collapse were exacerbated by the civil war (1992-1997) and the “disintegration of the USSR has created a whole new migration situation in the post-Soviet space, above all in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region” (Tishkov et al, 2005, p.1).

4.1.2.1 The Effects of the Civil War

The civil war in Tajikistan is called “jangi barodarkush” (brothers killing each other). It affected the lives of people and it impacted involuntary mobility in the country. During the civil war, particularly in the first few years, 50,000 lives were lost and almost “one-tenth of the population” (600,000 people) was displaced. Almost 60 thousand became refugees in Afghanistan (Marat, 2009; Akiner & Barnes, 2001, p.16) and 13,000 to 20,000 thousand moved to Kyrgyzstan, and a greater number moved to Uzbekistan and Russia as labor migrants or refugees (Marat, 2009). In the Findings chapter, the biographical narratives of the students discuss the effects of the civil war on their lives. The narratives also indicate how the process created mobility and, at the same time, made the students resilient enough to be able to use their new opportunities productively.

4.1.3 New Challenges and Opportunities: International Relations

The collapse of the Soviet Union and “the rise of nationalism offered external players unprecedented opportunities to penetrate the once-closed political environment of Russia’s strategic backyard” (Voloshin, 2014). The European Union (EU) had established its relationship with Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in 1995, and Uzbekistan in 1996) since 1995, but its agreement with Tajikistan was postponed due to the civil war and was not signed until almost 10 years later, in 2004. (Voloshin, 2014). It is important to note that in the
early 1990s, the EU did not have political interest in establishing ties with Central Asian countries because the area was thought of as a remote region (Voloshin, 2014). After the terrorist attacks of 2001, Central Asian regions became an important focus of EU foreign policy; Tajikistan for example, became an important strategic partner in the fight against terrorism due to its close proximity to Afghanistan.

Many challenges were faced by the newly independent nations of Central Asia, the most prominent of which was the reformation of the education system (Anderson & Heyneman, 2005). The civil war of Tajikistan delayed the establishment of relationships with most developed countries. After the conflict had ended in 1997, Tajikistan struggled similarly to other post-Soviet countries with problems of transition, but it was also challenged with post-conflict reconstruction (Akiner & Barnes, 2001). Even after the peace agreement of 1997, political hostilities continued until 2001 (Heathershaw & Herzig, 2013).

4.1.4 Migration Patterns in Tajikistan

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the civil war created involuntary mobility (within Tajikistan and to neighboring countries) (Tishkov et al., 2005) which will be discussed in the Conceptual and Findings chapters. Negotiating the transition was harder because war interrupted and disrupted the process and Tajikistan was left further behind in its reform and its transition than its other Central Asian neighbors.

There are three distinctive groups of migration since the country achieved its independence (Olimova & Bosc, 2003, Jones et al., 2009). The first groups begin from early 1990 is called the “migration of intelligentsia” (Olimova & Bosc, 2003; Jones et al., 2009). This migration consisted mainly of highly skilled people specifically Russians, Germans and Jews, as well as some native Tajikistani people. The second group of migrants from Tajikistan were comprised of less educated heads-of-households. The third group consisted of young people aged from below 18 to 29 who
chose to discontinue their education and migrated to Russia for work. This study identifies another group of migrants: those who choose to continue their education beyond national borders. However, due to lack of a migration registration system, the existing statistics do not provide a complete picture of students’ mobility from Tajikistan (Akramov & Akramov, 2015; Kuddusov, 2010). Due to historical and linguistic ties, a great number of Tajikistan labor migrants (800,000 in 2008)\(^{64}\) as well as students choose to go to Russia (10,530 students) and some neighboring countries such as Kyrgyzstan (451 students) and Kazakhstan (1265).\(^{65}\)

### 4.1.4.1 Migration and Remittances in Tajikistan

Tajikistan is heavily dependent on remittances; the inflow of remittances in 2011 reached USD 3.06 billion, which is equal to 50 percent of the country’s GDP (Castles et al., 2014; Danzer et al., 2013; Voloshing, 2013).\(^{66}\) From standpoint of migration, theories and studies among CIS countries reveal that in Tajikistan, labor migration\(^{67}\) exceeds immigration 1 to 600, meaning that for every one migrant who enters the country, six hundred leave (Di Birtolomeo et al., 2014). Migration becomes an important stabilizing factor in some post-Soviet countries (Tishkov et al. (2005). This could be the reason that in some countries governments are not concerned with the issue of “brain drain” (see Chapter 2; 3 and 7); rather, they encourage young population to migrate.

Among Central Asian countries, Kazakhstan has the highest percentage of internationally mobile students (7\%) compared to Tajikistan (3.5 \%) and Kyrgyzstan (1.5\%) (Wilmoth, 2009, p.3). According to Rakhimov (2004), Kazakhstan was the first among Central Asian countries to

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\(^{64}\) The number of labor migrants and students are not clearly defined when the statistics discuss about labor migration and according to informal data number of Tajik labor migrants in Russia exceeds to 1 million and official data shows around 600,000 to 800,000.


\(^{67}\) Recent statistics on labor migrants indicates that around 29 thousand Tajiks received Russian citizenship. Available at [http://muhojir.info/news/610](http://muhojir.info/news/610) Accessed May 7, 2018. 67
launch its student exchange program in 1993 called Bolashak, meaning (The Future) which was created and promoted by Presidential decree in November 9, 1993. During that same year, Tajikistan experienced a civil war. However, despite these challenges, Tajikistan has also taken a few strong steps to support, globalize and internationalize its educational system.

4.2 Tajikistan Emergence for Higher Education

Research studies illustrate the history of knowledge seeking and knowledge exchange in Central Asians locally and internationally (Khalid, 2007). During the 75 years of the Soviet era, mobility occurred within confines of the Soviet Union.

The new policies and strategies play a key role in the internationalization of student mobility, but in Tajikistan, improvements to the quality of HE and progress of reform remain slow (Wilmoth, 2011; Crisis Group, 2009) and general in Central Asia. Research by Mok and Han (2016, p.50) demonstrates that Central Asian participation in higher education, particularly in Australia, remains the lowest compare to Arab states, Latin America, South and West Asia, North America and Western Europe as well as Sub-Saharan Africa.

According to UNESCO (2011, p.201) statistics, a total of 5,561 Tajik students have studied abroad around 2010 and 2011, around 2,836 studied in Russian federations; 1,495 in Kyrgyzstan; 336 in the U.S. and 162 in Turkey. The trend of mobility is changing from ‘language-culture-familiar’ places to areas where English is spoken, or areas with better educational opportunities. Within intensification of globalization, mobility of students has increased, as has the number of Tajikistani students engaged in higher education domestically.

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69 Central Asian countries have the median participation rate in international HE in the world (32%), comparatively four times higher than Sub-Saharan Africa (5%) and South Asian countries (11%) (Altbach et al., 2009).

70 In 2010, the government of Tajikistan supported 679 students financially to study abroad (Wilmoth, 2011), and this number increased to increase to 12,755 students in 2015 (Statistical compilation in the educational sphere, 2016).
Looking closely at the numbers, the data shows a gradual increase in the number of women taking part in higher education since 2013, but when compared with male participation, female participation remains very low. The national educational profile in 2014 demonstrates that the equality gap in education begins from secondary school (ages:11-17).\textsuperscript{71} Although the number of females in Tajikistan’s population is 1.2 percent less than the number of males, a 50 percent gap remains between them in regard to higher education and it is extended in the field of migration and mobility as well.

\subsection*{4.2.1 Higher Education and Domestic Mobility}

An analysis by Kaufman (1994, p.151) points out that, in the former Soviet Union countries, reforms fail to “correct the inadequacies of the past.” According to Merrill (2011), transparency and curricular independence are missing in former Soviet Union countries; this may be evidenced

by the process of internationalization of higher education in Tajikistan. Tajikistan also suggests a lack of transparency in how higher education is run although an attempt is now being made to ensure that admissions to universities are better managed through some initiatives under the educational reform program.\textsuperscript{72}

The range of HE internationalization studies demonstrates the complex aspects of internationalization, mobility and migration. At the same time, these studies focus on the changing government and institutional policies related to student’s educational mobility. Internationalization has led to “increased global competition” between universities in different countries, as many countries see internationalization of education as either a way of sharing knowledge, a way to remain competitive in the world’s economy (Bhandari & Blumenthal, 2009) or as a way to gain economic benefit through student’s tuition (de Wit, 2010). New developing countries and industrialized countries such as Japan, New Zealand and Canada compete with traditional universities such as the U.S., the U.K., Germany, France and Australia for global educational resources (de Wit, 2010). This competition is expanding to Singapore, Taiwan, China, the Middle East and within Central Asian to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

4.2.1.1 Role of Language as a Tool to Increase and Decrease Mobility

There is a decrease in the knowledge, or the use of Russian and Uzbek languages, as well as the recent use of new languages of instruction at Universities. At the same time, the statistics\textsuperscript{73} clearly demonstrate the slow progress towards linguistic expansion. Although recently Tajikistan has begun encouraging Russian teachers to teach Russian as a medium of instruction at schools at selected schools, such initiatives are not evenly spread and often operate in urban areas only,

\textsuperscript{72} In 2013, the government of Tajikistan opened the “National Center Test for University Admission.” This center seems to be free from corruption (allows less corruption) and allows a great number of students from middle class and lower middle-class families to get free admission to local universities.

\textsuperscript{73} Statistical Compilation in the Educational Sphere (2016).
leaving rural areas under-served.\textsuperscript{74} The new reforms in education “reflect administrative rewarding of policy statements rather than substantive differences in the structure of learning” (Kaufman, 1994, p.151). The scholarly analysis of the use of the national language highlights that developing countries promote “imagined national tradition and national purity” (Thibault, 2016) by emphasizing a national language that limits access to international education. The information on new destination countries with different languages is limited but the statistics already emphasize the importance of language familiarity and particularly the English language as the number of international student’s increases.

\textbf{4.2.1.2 Scholarships by President of Tajikistan}

Some reforms have been put in place for HE in Tajikistan. The government has introduced some measured to mitigate the rural/urban inequality in education. There is also “a presidential quota system” support young students from remote areas. Almost 60 percent of these quotas were given to girls from remote areas or from poor families to continue their HE education at local Universities or Institutions of Tajikistan. In 2015/16, of 4957 spaces, 2604 were given to girls (Statistical compilation in the educational sphere, 2016, p.135). The purpose of the presidential quota is to support students from families in need or students who are doing exceptionally well.\textsuperscript{75} There are issues with the actual distribution of the quota to girls in rural areas for a variety of reasons: here it is sufficient to note that policy intentions do not always translate into good practices.

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{74} September 201730 Russian teachers were sent to teach soft and hard science at schools of Tajikistan in Russian language (Asia-Plus, 2017).

\textsuperscript{75} The presidential scholarship system was established to support needy families but it could be distributed according to the decisions of institutional leadership.
In the context of Tajikistan, the movement of students occurs because of limited availability of choices locally and because of geographical constraints. Almost 72% of the population lives in rural areas.

The initial reform (2006-2015) of the education system of Tajikistan focused on financial issues, budget allocations and infrastructure (Tajikistan Education Plan, 2006-2015; UNICEF, 2008) and only began in the mid-2000s which indicates the slow response of the country to institute educational reform as well as internationalization of education after independence (1991).
Tajikistan's government has supported 38 government employee’s students to study in Japan (see Chapters 4;7) from 2006 to 2015 (Statistical compilation in the educational sphere 2016, p.162). The government’s efforts are complemented by the international community such as the U.S. Embassy in Dushanbe, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) program, Bactria, University of Central Asia, ERASMUS program, Multikid,76 the Aga Khan University in U.K (Asia-Plus, 2015), ADB program and Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE). This is an example of how “mass higher education has brought social mobility to millions worldwide” (Altbach, 2010).

76 Multikid is a private educational agency that is aimed to teach new knowledge and skills as well as encourage students to continue their higher education abroad.
4.2.1.3 International Students in Tajikistan

There are also a great number of international students who study in Tajikistan. Figure 4.5 shows Tajikistan as a host country for international students, most of whom are from India.

Figure 4.5 International Students Studying in Tajikistan

Source: Data is taken from Statistical Compilation in the Educational Sphere (2016). Compiled by author.

The figure above shows changes related to that there are now newly emerging host countries. The process of internationalization occurs not only from developed to developing countries; it is also possible for developing countries to offer higher education to students from further developed countries. The following chapter discusses new partnerships between Tajikistan and several other countries.
4.3 Tajikistan Foreign Policies: International Relations with Japan

As was previously discussed, the fall of the Soviet Union was a double-edged sword that brought both destruction and connections to the wider world, which allowed geopolitical powers to establish relationships with the newly independent countries. Japan was among the countries that accepted Tajikistan’s independence in 1992 which marked a change in direction in the foreign policies of both countries. In signing bilateral agreements and acknowledging the sovereignty of Tajikistan in December 1991, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)\(^{77}\) started its mandate as a capacity-building cooperation in 1993, and it initially offered 21 places\(^{78}\) for Tajikistani officials to study in Japan. The total number of people trained by Japanese institutions is estimated to be more than 1800 people (Asia Plus, July 2016) or 1680 according to the embassy of Tajikistan in Japan (Personal communication, March 15, 2017). Japan facilitates human development in the region of Central Asia and particularly Tajikistan through supporting different institutions and creating new programs. One such initiative focused on building the skills of young government officials through human development programs, educational and institutional exchange programs and other developmental projects.\(^{79}\)

In order to encourage stability and closer integration, new partnerships based on specific requirements of individual Central Asian countries were signed among members of the EU

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\(^{77}\) The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) provides assistance in peace building, rebuilding collapsed economies and structures, in order to contribute to the development of human resources (JICA Tsukuba profile, 2015).


\(^{79}\) In 2008, the JICE/JICA program encouraged only five government employees and two exchange students from the Slavonic University of Tajikistan. In 2016 the quota increased to seven government employees a new contract was signed with the Japanese Language faculty of Tajikistan to encourage exchange students from mentioned faculty as well. See “Japan Increases Scholarships Quota for Tajikistan Beginning from 2017,” Asia-Plus, July 27 2016, Available at https://news.tj/en/news/tajikistan/society/20160727/japan-increases-scholarship-quota-tajikistan-beginning-2017 Accessed August 29, 2016.

\(^{80}\) The role of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is to collaborate and contribute to developing countries by providing official development assistance (ODA) through fostering human resources and supporting in infrastructure development. Available at https://www.jica.go.jp/english/publications/brochures/c8h0vm0000avs7w2-att/jicaprofile_en.pdf Accessed August 24, 2017.
between 2007 and 2013 (European Communities 2009). These partnerships advanced educational opportunities by way of Education Corporation (EC), internationalization of education and access to emerging educational markets through different programs for post-Socialist countries such as ERASMUS Mundus and TEMPUS (European Communities, 2009). The European Commission established the ERASMUS project in 1987, which led to international student exchange mobility (Kuroda, 2007). In 2004, the number of students reached 2.7 million and nearly 80 percent of students traveled towards OECD countries such as Australia, Germany, France, Japan and the U.K. (Varghese, 2006).

The research by Varghese (2006, pp.15-16) indicates that almost 85 percent of Central Asian students move towards Eastern Europe (EE), Western Europe (WE), the Russian Federation (RF), North America (NA) or within Central Asian countries (for example, many Tajikistani students move to Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan). However, studies show that the great number of mobile students move toward Europe and other western countries. My own research indicates that many students see Western countries as the most developed and highest in terms of university rankings and quality of life (see Section 6.3.1). However, the pattern of mobility is changing; students are steadily moving toward new opportunity zones and not necessarily to the West.

The new emerging partnerships with East Asian (EA) countries such as China, Japan, and Korea have also increased educational market space or from Central Asian countries. Central Asian diplomatic relations with Japan began after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 but Japan took a cautious approach towards establishing these relationships (Dadabaev, 2016). Japan's general aim for its engagement with Central Asia seems to be to maintain peace and stability and

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82 TEMPUS is the European Union’s program that supports the modernization of higher education in European countries and partner countries such as Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Western Balkans and the Mediterranean regions. Available at http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/programme/about_tempus_en.php Accessed May 3, 2017.
83 European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (ERASMUS).
to connect with parts of the world from which it has historically been isolated, (Yagi, 2006) as Japan's prosperity and peace is interconnected with the world (ODA Report, 2010). Japanese ODA to Central Asia comprises 30 percent of the aid received by OECD countries. Japan is not a country that only provides an ODA; however, it has well established international education that encourages students to continue their education in Japan, in both Japanese and English languages. The following paragraph sheds light on higher education in Japan.

4.3.1 Japanese Higher Education Internationalization

For some countries such as Japan, the internationalization of education is thought of as a way of opening the country up to the global community (Okugawa, 2014). At the same time, international student mobility is also becoming a channel by which to attract highly skilled, low-wage labor migrants (Kahanec & Kralikova, 2011; Liu-Farrer, 2011) in the aging society of Japan (MEXT, 2014). Many argue that most countries internationalize because of skill gaps; by doing so they are able to hire more skilled individuals (Liu-Farrer, 2011; Hazen & Alberts, 2006).

The first steps toward internationalization in Japan were taken in 1877 when the government established the University of Tokyo as the first modern “world class” university (Yonezawa, 2009). In 1905 near the end of the Qing dynasty 8,000 students were dispatched to Japan from China (Kuroda, 2007). Japan went on to attract 117,927 international students as of 2006 (Yonezawa, 2008). Those individuals who influenced educational and policy discourse in the “Meiji and Taisho eras were very influenced by European and American ideas on education” (Aspinall, 2010, p.3). After world war Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro revised education policy and set education reform (Rinkyoshin) with an emphasis on internationalization with distinctive characteristics: expansion of Japanese language, promotion of international exchange

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84 The most influential educators at the end of the nineteenth century were Noguchi Entaro, Sawayanagi Masataro, Shimonaka Yasaburo and Harada Minoru who influenced and took charge of the International Education Society of Japan (Kokusai Kyoku Kyokai) (Aspinall, 2010, p.3).
and student exchange (Aspinall, 2010).

Studies on the education and internationalization of Japan (Ota, 2014) illustrate that the role of Japan as a global contributor also changed over time, first supporting developing countries then focusing on global presence or international status and national branding (Yonezawa & Shimmi, 2015). For Japan it is more to show the role of Japanese universities in promoting international relations (Shao, 2008). The shifts are related to political, academic, economic (Knight, 2003) and cultural aspects, from developing human resources (Shao, 2008)\(^{85}\) to the internationalization of universities and filling the labor gap (Liu-Farrer, 2009; Mosneaga, 2013). Figure 3.9 shows the increase of international students in Japan since the beginning of the internationalization project.

**Figure 4.6 International Students’ Statistics in Japan**

![Graph showing the increase of international students in Japan](image)

Source: Data is taken from Japan Student Service Organization (JASSO) statistics\(^{86}\) and compiled by author.

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\(^{85}\) Shao sheds light on understanding the notion of students in Japan. Early on, students were recognized as sojourners (*ichijiteki taizaisha*) but later students extended their visas and remained longer.

As shown in Figure 3.9, the number of international students in Japan increased tenfold, from 10,428 in 1983 to 109,508 in 2003 for several reasons: the growing Japanese economy, simplified visa procedures and changes to part time labor policies (Hennings & Mintz, 2015). For internationalization purposes, Japan initiated “Preparatory Language Training Courses” (PLTC) in China and Malaysia in 1982 (Umakoshi, 1997). Students in countries such as Korea and China selected Japan to study in because for them Japanese education was seen as a model of modernization, and at the same time, Japan was thought of as being geographically and culturally close (Ota, 2003; ISPJ87; ISP). In the last three decades Japan has done much to shift its reputation from workforce to education as well see in the next section.

4.3.2 New Plan to Attract International Students

In the 1980s, after Japan strengthened its economic power, its education system also started to contribute to global academic knowledge (Yonezawa, 2015). Studies on internationalization of education in Japan show that initially, international students were thought of as sojourners (ichijiteki taizaisha) but in reality, some number of students live in Japan for extended periods, some of whom eventually obtain permanent residency (Shao, 2008; Luthra & Platt, 2014). My research shows that once they have studied in Japan, many Tajik students find it an attractive place to live in for a variety of reasons (see Section 7.2).

In 2005, MEXT outlined its international strategy in terms of strengthening its relationships with Asian countries and its “soft power”88 to attract international actors (Yonezawa, 2008) but again, the outline does not precisely delineate its relationships with Central Asian countries.

Some of Japan's most significant advances in the internationalization of higher education

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87 Japan’s International Student Policy.
88 There are three types of powers highlighted: military, economic and soft power (see Akiyoshi, 2008). Soft power is described as “the ability to influence others to obtain the outcomes one wants” (Nye, 2008, p.9).
can be attributed to former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who in 2006 promoted the 30 Top
Global University Project (Global 30) with the aim of “enhancing the international compatibility
and competitiveness of HE in Japan” and to make Japan “a more open society” (Okugawa, 2014).
The idea of internationalization for Japan, as in other developed countries, is to emphasize “the
role of education in promoting international relations” (Rizvi, 2011).

In 1983 MEXT released a plan to host 100,000 students from all over the world by 2000;
10,000 would receive full scholarships from the Japanese government and 90,000 would be
funded privately (Umakoshi, 1997). The set target was eventually achieved in 2003, reaching
109,508 students. The available statistics on the exchange of foreign students between 1999 and
2000 reveal that the United States is the most popular destination for student migration, attracting

The Japanese Government announced its new plan targeting 300,000 exchange students by
2020 (Shimomura, 2013) to make Japan a “network hub” (Ennew & Fujia, 2009). For Japan, to
internationalize is to contribute to the growth and development of the international community
through developing human resources (Shimomura, 2013).

In 1983 the Nakasone administration intended to promote human resource development in
developing countries (Shao, 2008; Yonezawa, 2009; Hennings & Mintz, 2015), however later in
2008 the emphasis shifted toward skilled workers. Some scholars demonstrate that an
internationalization policy is in line with Japan's aging population (Yonezawa, 2009; Hennings &
Mintz, 2015); the government of Japan views graduates students as a potential source of skilled
workers. In some cases, internationalization of education is aimed toward gaining profit (Altbach
& Knight, 2007).

According to some sources such as Ota (2003) the Japanese education system is working
hard at preserving their own culture and traditions which demonstrates that the education policy
of Japan is struggling between “two arenas… for either more national or more international
visibility” (Teichler, 1999, p.19). Education is seen as the key factor for strengthening the
country's soft power in the global arena. For developing countries, international HE is important
in developing their human resources (Koda et al., 2011). Yonezawa (2009, p.204) highlights that
there are at least two main arenas of internationalization:

a) Expansion of the host country system or to establish a leading position for Japan and,

b) Transformation of the learning environment of domestic students.

Internationalization of education is seen a new accumulation of a commodity for some
countries such as the U.K. Australia, and the U.S (King et al., 2011, Albach & Teichler, 2001) but
at the same time mobility has increased pressure (Bhandari & Blumenthal, 2009) for some
countries such as Japan to become knowledge hubs and to achieve rankings equal to other
countries (Yonezawa, 2009). In recent years, East Asian countries and universities such as
Singapore, Korea, China and Japan are also competing globally by striving to become dynamic
centers for international students while the United States has remained first in the ranking since
it was able to achieve mass HE in 1960s (Altbach et al., 2009; Findlay, 2010). With recent U.S.
and U.K. political policies, the number of HE students might increase in Asian universities as
policies in the U.S. and the U.K. are restricting mobility. The increase in the number of students
also raises the question of dynamism of the education phenomenon, and demand and response to
the process of mobility (Rizvi, 2011; Verbik & Lasanowski, 2007).

89 The idea of ranking creates great pressure on particular institutions to achieve the same level of education
91 International migration was restricted in the Asian countries but due to economic and political cooperation among nations,
Asian countries are also removing movement barriers (IOM, 2015, p.53).
92 The new presidential election (2016) and policies that President Trump enacted towards migrants have recently discouraged the
flow of students towards the U.S.
93 Prime Minister of the UK also refused to remove foreign students from immigration figures which also impacts students’
participation in Higher Education. There was falsification of numbers which expressed that a large number of students remain
The same could be true for Japan, which attracts a large number of students from regional Asian nations with which there are cultural and historical connections. Ota (2003, p.32) underlines that “Japan has been the prime location of import for western knowledge, science and technology, modifying Western knowledge for Asian use and then exporting the expertise to other Asian countries through international student exchange” in which, 75 percent of international students are from neighboring countries such as China.

Scholarly articles on this subject indicate that Japan’s approach and rationale for attracting students from abroad has also shifted from supporting developing countries in developing human resources (Shao, 2008). The shifts are seen to be related to local, political, academic and economic aspects (Knight and de Wit, 1997; Knight, 2003; 2006). At the same time, there has been a great policy shift from aid to contribute to the development of poor countries to trade (Rizvi, 2011).

4.3.3 Relations of Tajikistan and Japan

The civil war of Tajikistan drew the interest of many countries such as Japan. After establishment of a diplomatic relationships in 1992, these two countries signed bilateral contracts and, after a long silence, began collaborating in 1999 (Rakhimov, 2014). However, according to the Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship by Japanese Grant Aid (JDS), they had been collaborating with governmental institutions since 1998 and had brought several students to Japan to continue their education. For the Central Asian community, the impact of the Official Development (ODA) program's policies, particularly grants for students who study in Japan, is seen as significant support given by Japan to Central Asian countries (Rakhimov, 2014).

However, Japanese ODA policies towards Central Asian countries are very ambiguous (Dadabaev, 2016) and do not clearly specify the nature of Japan’s relationships with them.

According to these policies, Central Asian countries are still categorized as either European countries or ‘others.’ Japan collaborates with them based on each country’s needs, as well as their strengths. There is limited information on the relationships between Japan and countries in Central Asia (Dadabaev, 2016) and data related to international student mobility is also scarce (Koda et al., 2011). The reason for this lack of information could be because a small number of students come from Central Asia compared to those from China and Korea. There is some information available on Malaysian, Chinese and Korean students that was conducted by different scholars and research programs such as JICA in 2011 and 2012 to identify the outcomes of students’ mobility in Japan.

Although Japan signed a bilateral agreement with countries in Central Asia, it still has a “lack of clearly defined goals for regional engagement” (Dadabaev, 2013). As it is seen in the case of human resource involvement, there is no clear explanation of why there are big differences in the numbers of students (see Table 3.2) from Central Asian countries who study in Japan. Although Tajikistan remains a poor country among other Central Asian countries, the number of participants remains lower than those of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.

### Table 4.1 Number of Central Asian Students in Japan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of country</th>
<th>Tajikistan</th>
<th>Kyrgyzstan</th>
<th>Uzbekistan</th>
<th>Kazakhstan</th>
<th>Turkmenistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Participants</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>1,986</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data retrieved from Immigration Bureau of Japan[^95^] and compiled by author.

Different programs and numbers are also involved in international cooperation. ODA\textsuperscript{96} is placed at the core of development and international cooperation: it is not considered a “charity” but a “modality”\textsuperscript{97}(ODA Report, 2010, p.7).

In recent years Japan has become another new destination country for Tajikistani students. Bilateral agreements between the two countries have resulted in a Japanese presence in Tajikistan through its aid agencies such as ADB, JAICA and scholarship programmes such as JICE, MEXT. There are several programmes that Japan uses to attract different types of international students from Tajikistan such as young government employees, language learners, and researchers. It does this through initiatives like the young leaders’ program and student exchange programs. Japan also offers scholarships and encourages self-financed students (see Chapter 4, Section 2).

4.4 Summary

This chapter provided information about the context of Tajikistan, as well as a brief historical background on how, why and when educational mobility exploded in Central Asia, particularly in Tajikistan, and how this was framed by the change from Sovietization to Internationalization. It then described the process by which countries seek to engage with each other for reasons of national expediency (for example, to attract talent and create a workforce for the country) or foreign policy (for example, to become international hubs for example). The chapter then examined the relationship between Tajikistan and Japan. This chapter has sought to contextualize the motivation behind student mobility and shed some light on the salient factors that have resulted in Tajikistani students seeking to continue and further their studies in Japan. The next chapter discusses the methodology that was used to explore, analyze and understand

\textsuperscript{96} The ODA Report uses the word “concrete outcome target” but it does not concretely specify its contribution towards Education, whether it should fall under the aim of “investing in peace” or “supporting sustainable growth” (ODA Report, 2010, p.8). ODA report clearly underlines its focus with East Asia (not specifically CA), Africa and the Middle East.

\textsuperscript{97} Modality - mode or manner.
Tajikistani students’ motives for wanting to pursue higher education, the reasons for their choice of Japan as a host country and their own understanding of their experiences.
5.1 Introduction

Having established the background context, this chapter now looks at the methodology. The first section considers the ontological and epistemological issues that guided my choice of a qualitative approach. I discuss how my prior presence affected the research process, and my use of reflexivity to make transparent my multiple roles in the field. The next section explains the selection of the data-generation tools and their efficacy in the field context. In doing this, the chapter continues to build on the discussion of the complex and evolving connection of the context and people introduced in Chapter (Findings 6; 7) which convey the findings in Part Two. A consideration of the ethical implications of the study concludes this part of the study.

5.1.1 Qualitative Approach

This research used a qualitative approach to explore student’s experiences of educational mobility, their feelings and their everyday lives as they were lived in Tajikistan, their home country, and now in their host country, Japan, to understand what had motivated them and how moving to Japan motivated them. A qualitative approach is most relevant as it captures voices of participants in different localities. Sheila Keegan (2009) articulates the meaning of the qualitative approach:

Qualitative research is less easy to define. It explores questions such as what, why and how, rather than how many or how much; it is primarily concerned with meaning rather than measuring. Understanding why individuals and groups think and behave as they do lies at the heart of qualitative research. It is sometimes described as cultural research because the focus is on the relationships between people and/or between people and products, services or brands within a specific cultural context (Keegan, 2009, p.11-12).
The qualitative approach allows the reader to capture the meanings and everyday life experiences of students, which is the main purpose of this study (see Chapter Findings). The qualitative approach is rich and holistic, grounded in the specific local context, and puts emphasis on people’s life experiences and the meanings made by participants (Mason, 2002; Denzin, 2001; Strauss, 1987). The data (see Chapter 6; 7) shows, as I shall demonstrate later, that students’ experiences continued to be affected by their local and international contexts. Another strength of the qualitative approach is that it allows the co-creation of a process by actors and researcher in which the relationships are more equal. The researcher is engaged in an unfolding dialogue with the participants rather than simply ‘mining’ information from them (see Section 5.4). Given my interest was in student motivation (why did they want to continue their studies), student choice (why Japan) and importantly, what that has meant for them as individuals (student experience), a qualitative approach was the most appropriate way to conduct this inquiry.

5.2 Positionality: Insider and Outsider, Being Under Different Microscopes

The fact that I was Tajik, a woman and trying to do a PhD study, helped to create positive rapport with the participants. They saw commonalities with themselves and this made them want to contribute and to give me time and space in their busy lives. During the interviews it became clear that, within the diversity of the students, there are some things that connect all different views, backgrounds and experiences. These connections include: being from Tajikistan, being students, facing the same educational academic struggles and having a desire to improve our knowledge and life. Although there are found to be some differences, broadly speaking, they have

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98 However, the study could not be fulfilled without some statistical data, which was provided in the context background. The statistics in the context background were used to support the qualitative research findings, which to me was the ‘bridging’ of the data (Miller & Fox, 2004).
a similar contextual background to my own.

Therefore, my position as both an insider who is part of the culture and an outsider looking in from a distance, as well as being an international student myself, is something important to be considered during research findings “as the researcher plays such a direct and intimate role in both data collection and analysis” of the data (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p.55). The debate surrounding insider and outsider positions in qualitative research has become an important discussion and scholars such as Dwayer and Buckle (2009, p.55) suggest, “(although a) researcher might be part of the culture under study; he or she might not understand the subculture.” However, my own experience as international student adds to this research to understand participants in the process of their educational journeys, “subjectivities and emotional lives” (Gill & Goodson, 2011).

Being an insider creates a danger of losing the objectivity of the researcher, since being aware of their own feelings and views may impact their research. Being aware of the possibility of bias or subjectivity on my part led me to constantly question ‘how I know what I know.’ I constantly questioned, “is it my previous knowledge or is it coming from the data.” This reflexivity enabled me to be vigilant in conducting this study. Having described the researcher’s positionality, the following section explains more about the research participants.

5.3 Research Sampling

As there have been very few research studies undertaken on Tajikistani students’ mobility, the first few months of this research were devoted to creating a list of individuals who have studied in Japan. The selection of participants was the beginning of the research journey as well as its findings. This process in itself served to nuance the thesis because it revealed a diverse group of students engaged in different ways in education in Japan. Before the interviews, students
were informed orally about the purpose of the research as well as in writing by way of a consent form (see Section 5.7; Appendix 2). I found that there are exchange students, undergraduate students, Master of Arts, doctoral students and short-term professional development workers.

The snowball connection and developing a list of students allowed me to make decisions about who should be contacted. I focused only on students who have spent more than a year in Japan and already have some experience with its culture and educational system. The research focused on understanding “experiences, opinions, attitudes, values and processes” (Lo Iacono et al., 2012). The testimonies provided an overview on the process of mobility in home and host countries and its impact on each student’s progress (see Chapter 6; 7).

This study used a “snow-ball sampling” method, not only because of “cost and time factors” (Adams et al., 2007, p.89) but because of the lack of data and statistics on international students from Tajikistan. There is no unified database on how many students study abroad every year and which type of study they are engaged in. Some of the research participants voluntarily introduced their friends, indicating for example, “I know some students in [particular city] if you wish to talk to them, I will contact them and ask for their permission if they agree I will share their contact information with you” (Zehn, 2017). This also demonstrates participants’ empathy with my work. Other research participants were asked to introduce any other students from Tajikistan if possible. Students were very mindful of research ethics and, before introducing their friends, they contacted them and asked if they would be willing to participate. In this and many other senses, the research participants were not passive interviewees; they engaged with the process completely. Adams et al. (2007) suggest that it is more important to think about time and cost than to decide on whether to have small-scale or large-scale sampling. Due to my time constraints, 37 participants who have spent more than a year in Japan were interviewed.
Since June 2016, I have contacted 60 (see Figure 5.1) individuals out of whom 37 agreed to take part in this research study. 34 interviews (3 e-mail communications) were conducted with Tajikistani students in Tajikistan and Japan (Table 5.2) as well as various stakeholders such as members of the Tajikistan Academy of Science, the Bureau of Statistics, Japanese programs in Tajikistan and Japanese language departments. 18 interviews were conducted face-to-face, 16 were conducted via Skype and three via email. The length of the interviews ranged from 60 to 90 minutes with students and 25 to 35 minutes with members of the other institutions last mentioned above.

Research participants were students aged 20 to 45 who were residing in Japan at the time of the interviews. Although this research aimed to have adequate representation of both genders, there were, ultimately, fewer female participants than male participants (see Table 5.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Pseudonyms</th>
<th>Region they come from</th>
<th>Date and place of interview</th>
<th>Scholarship recipient or not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>June 21, 16; Japan</td>
<td>MEXT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Khotun</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>June 30, 16; Japan</td>
<td>MEXT</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mullo</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>July 5, 16; Japan</td>
<td>Self-financed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Zebi</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>July 6, 16; Japan</td>
<td>JDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Saido</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>July 7, 16; Japan</td>
<td>MEXT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rauf</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>July 10, 16; Japan</td>
<td>Self-financed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Jalil</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>July 22, 16; Japan</td>
<td>MEXT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Hamid</td>
<td>A</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Shodi</td>
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<td>Aug 18, 16; Tajikistan</td>
<td>JDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Aidar</td>
<td>Capital</td>
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<td>JDS</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Rasul</td>
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<td>Aug 19, 16; Tajikistan</td>
<td>JDS</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Capital</td>
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<td>JDS</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Farishta</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Suhrob</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Aug 21, 16; Tajikistan</td>
<td>JDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Kuibek</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Oct 7, 16; Tajikistan</td>
<td>ADB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

99 Concerns about time, and health but few did not explain anything. One reason could be because of sensitivity. I did not probe their reasons and wanted the research participants to take part voluntarily.

100 Students study/ied in different universities of Japan: Nigata-7 students, Beppu-4 students, Osaka- 5 students, Nigata-6 students, Tsukuba-10 students, Kyoto-2 students, Tokyo-4 students, Chiba-4 students, Kobe-1 student were interviewed.

101 MEXT – Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

102 JDS- Japanese Grant Aid is funded by the Government of Japan through Official Development Assistance (ODA)

103 Email-contact

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Financial Status</th>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Odil</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>Japan</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Safar</td>
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<td>Japan</td>
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<td>Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Anvor</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Zanjir</td>
<td>Capital</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Zoir</td>
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<td>Mar 16, 17</td>
<td>Japan</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>29</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Bahrom</td>
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<td>31</td>
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<td>12, 2017</td>
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<td>20, 2017</td>
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The main research participants were current and former students who study and had studied in Japan and had now returned to Tajikistan and, at the time of this research project, were working there. Another category which, emerged as important in the course of conducting the interviews, was whether participants had Soviet background.

While piloting the questions, the researcher found differences in the number of years participants spent in Japan, the dates on which they obtained their degrees as well as time-period (post-Soviet and independent-era students), employment and marital status, and this is now accounted for in the categorization of the participants (see Figure 5.1) and subsequently in analyzing the data.

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105 Email-contact
The data revealed that different groups of students are encouraged to study in Japan through different programs (see Appendix 3). For example, exchange students, language teachers and young government employees are part of inter-institutional partnerships. There are also self-financed students (who enrolled directly without institutional permission) who apply to gain scholarships. At the time of the interview, most participants were single. Of the 11 participants who were married, almost all of them lived with their families in Japan. The research participants’ levels of education were either bachelor, master or doctoral. Most of them were Master of Arts and doctoral students (see Figure 4.1). The researcher focused on three groups of informants: current students in Japan, former students who formerly studied more than a year in Japan and people who are currently working either in Japan or in Tajikistan. Micro-context such as age, education, family background, region, language, gender and employability were crucial, as all of these factors had a bearing on student experience. Narratives demonstrate that each of these factors influences students differently; for example, students from rural areas have to cross many boundaries on the path to international education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.2 Categorization of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Government Employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Japanese Language Learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Independent Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Undergraduate Students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The number of participants, particularly language learners and self-financed students, is increasing.\textsuperscript{106} However, ‘individual interested students,’ meaning those who are not government employees and do not understand Japanese, are decreasing. The empirical work in Japan started since June 2016 and continued through December 2017. In Tajikistan, interviews were conducted between August and September 2016. Due to the lack of information on international student mobility from Tajikistan, the researcher visited some related institutions (Japanese Language Faculty, Academy of Science, JICA and the Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan) and observed the context, institutions and people purposefully to gain deeper understanding about the topic.

There were students who did not openly share challenges they have faced during the course of their education, which could be “because of their political, personal and sensitive nature” (Kandiko & Weyers, 2013). As an insider, I could understand the subtext conveyed by their silence regarding some important and sometimes sensitive things, which another researcher might have missed.

\textsuperscript{106} Personal communication with the embassy of Japan and testimonies of students has shown that the number is increasing particularly Japanese language learners.
5.3.1. Contextual Information of Students

All participants in this study come from different regions, different families, ethnic backgrounds and different linguistic backgrounds in Tajikistan. Some students lived during the civil war but some had just been born at that time so they do not have any firsthand experience regarding the effects of the war. However, they felt the impact of the consequences in the quality of their lives and education. All participants had spent more than a year in Japan at the time the research was conducted. This is important because students already have significant experience living in their host country. Almost all students’ parents had been educated during the Soviet period, and all of them had received at least secondary education and most had a bachelor degree.

The researcher was unable to sample information from a gender-balanced set of participants due to a lack of female students in Japan as well as general reluctance from female students to take part in the research compared to male members. Also, the majority of female students who come to Japan are exchange students who did not meet the criteria of having lived in Japan for more than one year, so they were not included in this study. The significance of this is discussed in Chapter (6; 7).

One significant point is the diversity of the students' family backgrounds. Some are children of ministers, teachers, doctors, farmers and various other professions, but the unique part within this diversity is all of them are equally taking part in the global mobility of education. Another similar characteristic was their critical analyses of their broader context of Tajikistan. As is to be expected, some people who travel are mature, open to changing their lives and ready to face new educational challenges. For some of them, the civil war also influenced their outlook on education (see Chapter 4 Context Background; 7 Findings). These points are highlighted by the findings of this study.
My research shows that the experience of international education goes beyond economic disparities and demonstrates the importance of youth culture, youth resilience and enthusiasm in the new competitive world. The process of mobility leads students to make decisions about their education and future career. In this process, a student’s nationality, economic situation, ethnicity and gender influence the experience of each individual (Jones & Mielants 2009).

5.4 Method of Data Collection: Biographical Narratives

I used a variety of data collection tools including biographical narrative, informal concentrations, documentations and observation. These are discussed below.

5.4.1 Biographical Narrative

The use of the biographical narrative as a research method began in the 1920s in the study of migration in the field of sociology, and later expanded its roots to other social and humanistic fields, such as psychology and medicine (Apitzsch & Siouti, 2007; Rosenthal, 2004). This research used the biographical method operating with narrative methods (Rosenthal, 2004) so participants could share their educational narratives without interruption, and questions were asked to confirm and clarify the content that they shared.

I used biographical narrative to obtain data in two ways; through face to face interviews and via skype interviews (see Section 5.3). I asked permission to record the data from the participants before I began the interview. I chose the biographical narrative method because it allowed me and the participants to examine their experiences in more depth than a formal interview might have done. The nature of my study required me to engage the participants such that they had the space and scope to contribute their insights without the constraints of too much structure or restraint. In this, I was guided by “methodologies that celebrate richness, depth, nuance, context, multi-dimensionality and complexity...” which enriches the data that is collected (Mason 2002, p.1). I
posit that biographical narrative also allows the richness of data through “getting inside of the actor’s perspective” and examining the “actual human experiences and attitudes that constitute the full, live and active social reality beneath the formal organization of social institutions” (Rosenthal, 2004, p.48).

The purpose of narrative is also to explore and understand “interplay between social change, individual lives and agency” (Gill & Goodson, 2011, p. 157). The method yielded a richness of data that almost overwhelmed me at times but which has substantially enriched this study and helped to uncover the complexity of the issue at hand. Methodology also gives some control to the participant; for example, during an interview while discussing and moving to another point, the participant said “wait I am coming to that but I need to tell you this first” (Odil, 2016). Rosenthal (2004, p.49) suggests that:

In order to understand and explain people’s actions it is necessary to find out about both the subjective perspective of the actors and the courses of action. We want to find out what they experienced, what meaning they gave to their actions at the time, what meaning they assign today, and in what biographically constituted context they place their experiences.

This statement captures the significance of the method and demonstrates the connection between the research questions (see Appendix 1), topic, context and individual voices of participants. Because this method is participant–led to some extent, subsequent questions for clarity and further probing differed with each participant (relating either to context or experiences, educational trajectories, local spaces, family issues) but stayed within the parameters of the study.

This thesis has yielded complex and interesting stories on students’ motivation and mobility linked to their life trajectories, which are discussed in the findings and subsequent chapter. It is the narrative biography method that helped to bring this complexity to light. My research focuses on educational mobility trajectories; although I use biographical narrative, my specific focus is on
Through biographical narrative conversations, I found “how subjects experience and define” their experience and describe “moments that leave positive and negative marks on [their] lives” (Denzin, 2001, p. 41). The significance of the biographical narrative is based on connecting “the process of [individuals’ or their narratives'] creation, reproduction and transformation” (Rosenthal, 2004, p.49). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p. xvii) suggests that:

If you want to know how people understand their world and their lives, why not talk with them? Conversation is a basic mode of human interaction. Human beings talk with each other; they interact, pose questions, and answer questions. Through conversation, we get to know other people, learn about their experiences, feelings, attitudes, and the world they live in. In an interview conversation, the researcher asks about, and listens to their dreams, fears, and hopes; hears their views and opinions in their own words; and learns about their school and work situation, their family and social life.

Biographical-narrative is not only a way of interviewing people; it is a way of entering another person's life story. Research participants become both “interpreter and interpreted; the reader and the writer of one’s own life” (Gill & Goodson, 2011, p. 159). The interview itself was also created by the interviewer and interviewee (Kupfer, 2015; Fontana & Frey, 2000) as they socialized and exchanged experiences, analyzing the situation and asking questions about the existing issues and opportunities.

The process of conversation allowed the researcher to enter the experiences of the narrators concerning the phenomenon that provided a greater opportunity to understand the social reality and the process of mobility of students. As Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggest, the process of interviewing and having conversations allows a researcher to explore the views and opinions that are expressed in a person's own words. The biographical narrative approach allowed me to explore the perspectives of participants from the early years of their education and the process of moving
towards higher education domestically and internationally. The narratives were related to the life stories of the interviewees but questions to clarify deeper meanings also inspired them to provide more detailed information. The clarifying questions I used were significant as participants went deeper to analyze and interpret their own lives.

The biographical narrative allows enquirers to “create an account of an account,” to make sense of participants’ view about their own educational process (Kupfer, 2015, p.44). Actors produce social reality when they interpret their social reality (Rosenthal, 2008). Denzin (2001, p.58) argues that: “The subject matter of interpretive research is biographical experience. It is carved out of the lives of ordinary men and women. Interpretive studies… are organized in terms of biographically meaningful events or moments in subjects’ lives.” This process is more reflective and analytical rather than just promptly answering the questions raised by interviewee.

5.5 Data Collection Tools

This research used interviews (face to face and Skype) and e-mail as tools for data collection. This research “generated useful information about lived experiences and (their) meanings” (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p.632) through face to face and Skype-based interviews, and email communication with 36 students (see Chapter 7). The interviews (See Appendix 1, Research Questions) allowed understanding of the interaction between the participants’ experiences before leaving their country of origin as well as the role of different localities in their motivations and life trajectories. The interviews, observations and questionnaires revealed, “how historically and culturally located systems of power/knowledge construct subjects and their worlds” (Gubrium & Holstain, 2000, p. 493).
5.5.1 Face to Face Interviews

Interviewing is both a method and a craft that allows learning from purposeful conversation in social context with the purpose of producing knowledge (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Before knowing the craft of the interview, it is important to be aware of simple cultural nuances. Biographical narrative-interviews were utilized to generate data from a particular context that allowed for detailed exploration of the data (Lewis, 2000). Information was gathered directly from students by way of interviews (see Findings Chapter 6; 7). Interviews “generate[d] useful information about lived experiences and [their] meanings” to students (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p.632) and new knowledge about students’ experiences was constructed through inter-action (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

In most cases, participants did not need to be guided by the interviewer. Rather, the participants freely shared their educational biographies and their future aspirations. However, as Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p.2) assert, “human interaction and knowledge production” are interdependent, and many interactions were enriched through gestures and facial expressions as well.¹⁰⁷ Students shared their “educational biography”; an account of how they started their educational journey and continued it in Japan. Participants come from many different geographical locations and from different social, family, professional and educational backgrounds, and all of these layers influence their mobility and life trajectories in the places where they choose to study (see Section 6.1).

Before the actual interviewing begun, the interviewer established a rapport between participants; for example, discussing educational achievements and asked about their families, either in Japan or back home in Tajikistan. In Tajik culture, this constitutes a significant part of greeting people, be they close friends or strangers. Most of the time, greetings between friends start with chi khel shumo or (how are you?). In Tajikistan, it would be offensive to just say “hi”

¹⁰⁷ Most of the Skype interviews utilized video.
and pass by a person whom you know; it is important to immediately ask, “how are you?”

Establishing a rapport provides a starting point for conversation but as Silverman (1987) reminds us, it does not determine what should be said.

The research focused on taking the interviewees through sharing their educational histories. The interview itself was pivotal for students as many of them emphasized that the questions allowed them to reflect about educational and professional experiences.” However, Hadis (2005, p.5) emphasizes that “one can never trust memory too much.” This technique or method of educational autobiography lends itself, to situations where episodes in a person’s life become extremely important to them.

At the same time, research participants emphasized that these kinds of discussions happen among international students as well during gatherings and events. In these situations, they share their life stories but not consciously or critically. The biographical narrative is one way to create an environment for participants to reflect on and analyze their life stories. In other words, it is a critical moment for participants to reflect and share their life stories analytically with a particular focus. At the end of each interview, the researcher encouraged participants to give feedback, ask questions or share any ideas that were not asked. A great number of the respondents used the opportunity and shared that the interview questions allowed them to think about how much they have progressed in their educational life. Several of the participants wished the researcher luck in her current and future studies and some, as already mentioned, were supportive of my efforts, offering to put me in touch with other participants who have been living in Japan for more than a year.

I realized that ‘educational biography’ is significant in terms of connecting many indirectly interconnected stories: once during an interview I asked a student about his motivation to study in Japan and his reply was, “wait I am coming to this point, let me tell you about my first international experience because all of these experiences are connected. If I start talking about
Japan, then I have to go back and forth in order to show the process and discuss what made me choose Japan” (Yusuf, July 2016). The process of interviewing using the biographical narrative approach was important since it provided a better picture of the life stories of each participant, without being limited to the questions of researcher. As well as taking the lead and direction on of the process this also demonstrated his very clear understanding of my research and his willingness to do some of the interconnecting work for me.

5.5.2 Skype Interviews

According to Lo Iacono et al. (2012) “internet-based methods of communication are becoming increasingly important and influencing researchers’ options”: and in my case, they served to broaden my range of participants. Skype, email, Facebook, analysis of blogs and other social networks are becoming essential tools for connecting with people in different localities. Internet-based methods allow research to be conducted multi-locally. Authors Lo Iacono et al. (2012) emphasize that first; Skype allows international participants or those who live in far-away places to be reached. Skype allows geographical and physical boundaries to be transcended. Second the utilization of Skype interviews also helps to manage concerns related to money and time. Third, through Skype, it is possible to receive non-verbal cues in addition to speaking, although the degree to which this is possible differs from face to face interviews. Skype provides its user with the freedom to project a certain image by selecting their own interview location backdrop, clothes and language. This is connected to Goffman's (1990) idea of the uniquely human behavior of the presentation of self, which was also observed in the behavior of some former and current Tajikistani students. Problems can occur when using Skype, however face-to-face interviews can also be problematic if they have to be conducted in busy spaces or are subject to occasional interruptions. Lo Iacono et al. (2012) show that, although online interviews cannot

108 Most of the Skype interviews utilized video.
replace face-to-face interviews, they are a very good tool which can be used as an alternative. However, Skype is different as it provides both audio and video, which cannot be transmitted conveniently by email (Lo Iacono et al. 2012). For my research I found it to be an invaluable tool and the more we researchers use it, the better able we will be able to assess its efficacy.

In places such as Tajikistan, being able to be interviewed via Skype is already an indication of having a certain level of knowledge about modern technology; such a person understands technology and is connected to the global world. There are some participants who had been interviewed before via Skype and they initially found it difficult to build a connection with the interviewer through this medium. This research found that communicating via e-mail could be more time-consuming than communicating in-person or by Skype, as it is necessary to wait for the correspondent to read and reply to your message, thus the immediacy of the contact is lost.

Depending on the participant and the connection, Skype can be a useful and versatile tool for an interviewer. For example, for one interview the participant did not want to talk face to face, rather he/she only wanted to give a spoken interview. In that case the researcher was able to respect the participant’s wish and interview them through Skype without video, which they felt comfortable doing. However, “the expressive power of language provides important resource for accounts” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p.126). In fact, his/her reflection on his educational mobility was impressive and valuable information would have been lost had the researcher not respected the participant’s wishes and been able to conduct the interview was on his/her own terms. This research found that Skype does offer many benefits as a method of communication and it enabled me to reach participants I might not have reached otherwise.

5.5.3 Email Connection

There were a few participants who were willing to take part in the study but did not have time for a face-to-face or Skype interview. In my research, in order to respond to participants’
requests and needs I used a special tool to gather information via e-mail. This research used “opinionnaires” (Og’anya & Odoba, 2009) which contained the same research questions that were used during face-to-face and Skype interviews (see Appendix 1).\footnote{This tool involves written communication between the researcher and respondent (Parris, 2008). There are some advantages of utilizing e-mail, as is underlined by Paris (2008). Both data collection and transcription can occur at the same time. E-mail allows the ease of analysis and discussion as many details are automatically transcribed, including date, time and name of participant. It can also reach beyond geographical and physical boundaries and it is a convenient tool for busy people. However, there are several disadvantages of e-mail, including that it gives no control over how questions are answered, provides no direct observations and some questions may be left unanswered. A qualitative approach requires setting up a rapport with participants (Fontana & Fray, 1994) but via email, this presents a challenge. However, I mitigated this issue through establishing a rapport in-person for few minutes, introducing myself and my objectives before emailing them. This created a better understanding between both researcher and respondent. Because communication was conducted via e-mail and there was no Skype or face-to-face conversation, the answers sometimes were short. The interviewee has time and freedom to interpret the questions in his/her own way as well as to reflect and alter their responses before sending them to the researcher. Face-to-face interviews allow participants to freely express their ideas but when given an email, participants carefully consider the appropriate wording and style by which to answer the questions, as again this is also one way of presenting self. Most importantly, e-mail enabled me to include people who might otherwise have been missed and whose contributions were valuable even though they were brief. I have been careful to treat the data generated through this method with the caution that is needed when using such a method.}

The use of questionnaires is usually associated with quantitative research but open-ended questions generate valuable answers.
5.5.4 Using Documents

Using and consulting documents was among the first and last of my data collection methods. I collected some data online about Tajikistani students, views about young people in the context of Tajikistan, international students who go back to their home country and some policies related to higher education in Tajikistan. I also consulted documents during my research in Tajikistan while visiting different institutions, such as the Embassy of Tajikistan in Japan, the Embassy of Japan in Tajikistan, JICE program in Tajikistan, the Academic Institute of Science in Tajikistan as well as the Ministry of Education to find documents related to higher education in Tajikistan and the mobility of Tajikistani students.

5.5.5 Field Observation: In Tajikistan and Japan

Observations can be overt or covert, depending on whether participants are informed that they are being observed (Patton, 1990). There are arguments surrounding overt and covert observation, for example Edward Shils (1959) disregards the method of covert observation but Dauglas (1976) argues that “covert methods of research should be considered acceptable options in a search for truth” (cited in Patton, 1990, p.210). The issue is that observation is a natural part of our daily interactions so it is difficult in a sense to describe it as ‘overt’ or ‘covert’ when conducting qualitative research. The researcher cannot help being aware of facial expressions, mannerisms or other signals of comfort or discomfort particularly in institutions (for example, whether doors are open or closed indicating whether the person on the other side is open to conversations with colleagues or not, whether people smile or are serious etc.).

5.6 Data Analysis

Almost everyone “in daily life …engages in some form of qualitative analysis – without thinking twice about the matter” (Strauss, 1987, p. 4). Qualitative analysis is seen as the process
of “theory-construction” (Miller & Fox, 2004, p.44). According to Strauss (1987, p.4) “Analysis is synonymous with interpretation of data” and has three approaches: “explicitness, abstraction, and systematization.” In my research I utilized all of these approaches. According to Derida (1978), a text itself does not contain meaning; meaning is derived only by writing and reading it. The same applies to interview findings; interviews are not meaningful unless they are properly analyzed. Meanings should be given to the data according to its context and condition. Gubrium and Holstein (2000) emphasize that individuals make meanings based on their own practical reasoning, which is built from their own perception of the world.

In analyzing the findings, three main elements should be recognized: “the biography, the interaction process in which a biographical narration comes into being and the cultural patterns and social rules which guide the biographical narrations” (Apitzsch & Siouti, 2007, p.8). In the process of analysis, the researcher also made sure to recognize each participant’s social, cultural, economic and political contexts that shape their everyday lives and options. This also means that people are not only impacted by their immediate environment but can also be influenced by internet-based communities, tourism and NGO programs.

5.6.1 Thematic Analysis: Identifying, Analyzing and Reporting

I first transcribed each interview then I read them twice and began to organize them first by content and then also by age, location, and event. I used a thematic approach to “report patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.97). There are two main ways to analyze the empirical research/data: coming to data through specific questions or not (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The authors posit that:

…thematic analysis can be a method which works both to reflect reality, and to unpick or unravel the surface of ‘reality’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 100).
My analysis found themes which were related to the research questions and were meaningful to the data set. Themes might be apparent in some data but might not be found in other data. I found that themes emerge before analyzing my data, during the process of transcribing, listening to and translating it. As I continued to arrange the data according to those themes I discovered that I was grouping it together in some cases: I found that some themes were actually sub-themes (see Figure 5.1). Initially I sorted data based on its contents and then I performed further grouping for age, location and events in order to see if anything significant emerged from one group rather than another. There is a dialogue between the data and the researcher. Creating themes is part of the process of engaging with raw data. Analyzing the data starts when the researcher starts interviewing and taking notes about the interview.

**Figure 5.2 Making Sense of My Data and Creating Themes**
5.6.2 Codes of Ethics: Privacy and Confidentiality

Prior research studies suggest that researchers should “follow a code of conduct for the research [which] ensures that the interests and concerns of those taking part in, or possibly affected by, the research are safeguarded” (Robson & McCartan 2016, p.16). The researcher was aware of contextual nuances and “cultural, religious, gender and other differences that need to be respected” (Creswell, 2007, p.93). The researcher assured the participants that their information would be kept confidential, although some of them were very open to sharing their first initials. However, the details that were requested during presentations and dissertation write-ups would not ensure that the participants will remain anonymous: a small group of Tajikistani students are aware of who is doing what in Japan. The “code of ethics insists on safeguards to protect people’s identities and those of the research locations” (Christians, 2000, p.139). There is a possibility of finding out participants identity from information about scholarship, experience and the number years students have spent in Japan. To protect the participants’ safety, their names and their original regions have been made anonymous (Table 5.1). Removing the regional location names and changing participant’s names is an effective way to safeguard the anonymity of participants. The researcher used coded pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality.

Consent had also been sought from the participants and their desire that this be done orally rather than in writing, had also been respected. In an oral culture the word is sufficient (as it is in many other cultures and used to be in Western ones (evidenced in phrases still in use such as ‘you have my word’), to give one’s word: written consent is seen as particularly official and legalistic and for those who still recall Soviet times, even unsafe. However, the majority of the students preferred to give oral consent because, in the context of Tajikistan's culture, written consent seems too formal. Waljee (2010) research also point out that it is easy to ask for research participants’ consent orally in the context of Tajikistan’s culture.
5.6.3 Consent Form

Ethical issues regarding consent forms, confidentiality and anonymity of the data is a crucial part of the data collection process and a central aspect of this dissertation. Christians (2000, p.138) stresses that:

…research subjects have the right to be informed about the nature and consequences of experiments in which they are involved. Proper respect for human freedom generally included two necessary conditions. Subjects must agree voluntarily to participate… their agreement must be on full and open information.

Therefore, this research was also mindful of ethics of research and allowed the freedom of participants as well as informing them about the objective and purpose of the research. Participants were aware that they could withdraw from the process at any time.

5.7 Generalizability of Data

This research study focuses in a certain issue: - educational mobility - and a specific population of Tajikistani students in Japan. I did not seek to generalize the form of my findings. Has this been my intention I would have done a comparative study: generalizability is not an expected attribute. Having said that, there are clearly some parallels that can be drawn, for instance, the experiences of students from post-Soviet countries may resonate with some research and the same is true of post–conflict countries. There are some commonalities in student mobility experiences which might illuminate or corroborate other research. The fact is that generalizability in its entirety is more possible in quantitative studies: qualitative ones will find the generalizable elements in the commonality of human experiences and human situations.
Generalizability and validity in a sense are connected in terms of using systematic sampling, triangulation, documentation and multidimensional theory (Patton, 2002) as Patton observes. He suggests that:

The validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information richness of the cases selected and the observational/analytical capabilities of the researcher rather than with sample size (Patton, 2002, -244).

It is not the purpose of this study, with its small size, that findings be generalized. Although, there could be connections with developing countries who face the same issues and have similar contexts. The above-mentioned points: 1. Consistency of generated data, 2. Different sources within the method, 3. using multiple methods of analysis, and 4. Using multiple theories and perspectives (Patton, 1990, p. 464) can contribute to the validity of data. This research is valid in that it focused on ensuring the appropriateness of research questions, methodology that was used to answer research questions, the sampling and data analysis. Stake urges researchers to look for “naturalistic generalization” which is:

…epistemologically in harmony with the reader’s experience, and hence to that person a natural basis for generalization (Stake, 2000).

Waljee (2010, p.90) raises the question of “how much” can be generalized. It is important to keep the balance of generalizability while also keeping in mind the originality of the data. As my research focuses on student’s mobility, it could lend itself to naturalistic generalization; the readers, international students and international institutions could make generalizations with their experiences. Finally, as already mentioned, I used reflexivity to ensure that my own connection with the country, the study and the students did not unduly bias my findings and analysis.
5.8 Challenges and Research Limitations

As with all research, this research also has its own limitations. My data collection was limited to students, who had spent more than a year in Japan, and therefore it could not include a larger number of participants; otherwise, there were almost 1800 participants from Tajikistan who were engaged in short term programs in Japan at the time this research was conducted. However, the researcher hopes that this study and analysis will provide significant information for scholarly debates and spur further research. Due to time constraints and the distance of participants living in different cities of Japan, the researcher could not interview all participants in person, and so some were interviewed via Skype and e-mail.

In addition, the political situation in Tajikistan also affected the process of the data collection as, at the time this research was being conducted, the 25-year anniversary of Tajikistan's independence was taking place. Most institutions and leadership were engaged with the celebration and organization of the event. For the researcher, it was an opportunity to find some participants who were not too pressured with work, and they could give their precious time without any challenge. It was observed that some participants in Tajikistan were very careful in choosing their words during interviews due to the sensitive political relationship between Tajikistan and Japan. Misunderstandings could be mitigated due to my knowledge of the context, culture and language of the people involved. Those who were able to take part in this research have contributed to the understanding of the role of gender in international education in the context of Tajikistan.

5.9 Summary

The methodology chapter discussed how using the qualitative approach and biographical narratives allowed the researcher to understand students' experiences and motivations in the process of mobility. Moreover, biographical narratives allowed the researcher to understand
enables the researcher to build up a mosaic-like picture of the individuals and the events and people surrounding them so that relations, influences and patterns can be observed... The retrospective quality ... enables one to explore social processes over time and adds historical depth to subsequent analysis (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p.187).

Through the students' narration, they make their social world and their agency within it explicit to a large audience (Gill & Goodson, 2011). The methodology chapter also examined the researcher's positionality within the thesis process. It went on to describe the participants and how they were identified. Next, it discussed how the data was collected and the data analysis process, then it described how knowledge needs to be collected and sometimes deconstructed and reconstructed. The chapter ended with a consideration of ethical issues and the generalizability of the research. The next chapter will answer the first research question on the perception of students about their motivation to pursue higher education in Japanese universities.
CHAPTER VI – MOBILITY MOTIVATORS: THE SEARCH FOR ‘BECOMING SOMEBODY’

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings related to my first research question: “what motivates Tajikistani students to pursue higher education in Japanese universities?” The chapter is divided into two parts. Part one (Section 6.2) discusses the importance of personal desire to become somebody (kase shudan) and the role of agency to become active in shaping their own destiny through changing their localities. Findings describe notion of agency in the local context and its catalytic effect on the agency of changing localities.

The second section (Section 6.3) provides deeper insights into the existing structures that can become a catalyst ‘door opener’ and also widens choices for students. The section explains opportunities and social context that creates a notion of involuntary and voluntary mobility in the lives of people. It also discusses how a young generation managed to switch from difficult situation and change their life trajectories. It discusses insights on mobility factors and specificity of context, on the importance of local-to-local and local to international mobility that in turn creates constant movement in the lives of those who move. Here, the discussion also draws on Japan’s role in developing human capital or supporting young government officials.

6.1.1 Mobile Students Positionality: Self Perception

The data revealed multiple selves within the students’ positionality. They introduced themselves being from the capital (poitakht, shahr, markaz); their family background is intelligentsia, or ordinary workers.

I came from an intellectual family (Olim, 2017).
We [I] come from a family of intelligentsia. My parents are educated people [either teacher, doctor or employed in government institutions] (Zanjir, 2017).

It shows how students position themselves and it is important in obtaining the notion of self. The intellectual family is already an indication to continue the history of the family and to grow with it.

The role of parents also emphasized significantly, indicating mostly their father’s career either intellectual, intelligentsia, working class or migrant.

My father played a role in my decision and he was an English teacher [intelligentsia] (Saido, 2016).

I was born in an intellectual family […] . Interest in education, particularly reaching its highest level, probably, been inspired through my parents. This is just an inspiration, not an influence (Olim, 2017).

My father is an ordinary man but full of wisdom (Safar, 2017).

Biographical narratives bring out their thinking of who they are. They are demonstrating the notion of self and the intellectual heritage that they gained connecting it to family. Anecdotal narratives indicate the role of positioning is both: pointing to the role of their parents and indicating the importance of being a knowledgeable person. From an intellectual family also suggests the quality of education and role of their parents in the society.

The motivation of these groups is multi-faceted; therefore, it is important to consider the individual and at the same time broader social, political, economic and cultural forces influence their decisions within the process of educational mobility to Japan. At the same time, it was revealed that there are government employees, Japanese language learners, English language learners and undergraduate students.
Another group of students positioned themselves according to their geographical locations: for example, coming from a village (deha) or the mountainous (kuhistoni) which symbolizes the hard life, of poor quality and a lack of opportunities:

Everybody knows how life is difficult in deha [village]. There was a lack of professional teachers [referring to the period during civil war in Tajikistan]. The school conditions were not relevant/equivalent to the national standard let alone the global ones. (Anvor, 2017).

We are mountainous people. You know the condition of villages and mountains [indicating poor quality of life] (Hamid, 2016).

I came from a small village. Our village was very small; therefore, we studied in another village. You know the village is very far from economic development. However, in our village everybody wanted to learn, to seek knowledge, and to educate their children (Mullo, 2016).

The way they position themselves indicates their sense of family and place as being relevant to their motivation (i.e. the support or push from parents and hence the value placed on
education). However, it could not be attained in their locale due to the social and economic issues as well as mobility drivers (Solim, 2017; Zuhal, 2017; Shakar, 2017; Jalil, 2016).

The Figure below illustrates the students’ perception of their positionality and “the intersection of identities and the importance of contexts of origin” (Cargano, 2009, p. 332). But these four groups do not fall under one category as they are from different context (rural/urban), professions (labor migrants, government officials), public private schools and family background which the Figure 6.2 demonstrates visually.

**Figure 6.2 Positionality: Spatiality and Social Status**

The existing data demonstrates that one cannot see the students as a monolithic group. Their life trajectories influence who they are and where they feel they come from. While introducing themselves students referred to a multilayered self. The motivation of four groups (government employees, Japanese language learners, undergraduate students and English language learners) discussed in Figure 6.1 are not discrete; rather connected and overlapped.

These groups of students also had internal and “international” mobility experience either involuntary (during the civil war of Tajikistan) or voluntary (see Section 6.3.1) after the peace

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110 Movement of Tajikistani students to Russia cannot be framed within the local mobility nor international as they had the same historical background and even the first Tajikistanis look as going to the “brother” country.
treaty of Tajikistan.\textsuperscript{111} Long time inhabitants of a region became migrants, uprooted and displaced from their “home.” Some ended up in other regions of Tajikistan; others were forced to seek asylum in neighboring countries that connect to the discussion on voluntary and involuntary mobility (Kleist, 2017; Ottonelli & Torresi, 2013; Eastmond, 2007). Students, too, become geographically mobile.\textsuperscript{112} The testimonies speak to the disruptions of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the civil war.

If I remember well, I think I have changed schools 5-6 times while moving village to village and region to region… It was not only because of education, it was because of civil war… but at the same time, wherever I went, I continued my education immediately in the new place… Maybe at that time, my parents were not thinking about education as much as about our safety… (Zehni, 2017).

Moreover, those who received their education after the collapse of the Soviet Union and independence of Tajikistan (1991) speak about a changed educational context on the emergence of new private schools, the lack of qualified teachers, the lack of quality of education at the University level (depending on the universities they study at) and the opening of new ideas of migration to Moscow to earn money.

After the civil war, new programs emerged in the country. One of them was Turkish Lyceum. This lyceum laid the foundation of knowledge and taught me the importance of learning (Zehni, 2017).

The changed political and economic situation meant a changed education system and changed opportunities that led to student mobility. This research thesis also shows that

\textsuperscript{111} At the same time, research participants emphasize on the impact of the civil war, how it created involuntary mobility within the country and later the role of the NGO on encouraging and supporting educational mobility.

\textsuperscript{112} About 72\% of the population of Tajikistan lives in rural areas. These people are generally in search of better education and a better life. They seek education in different locations, such as regional and administrative centers.
biographical narratives bring out the “temporary past in the present” and demonstrates how motivation, mobility and desire to further their education are part of the students’ life trajectories. The following section discusses mobility motivators, the important of personal desire in searching for a better-quality life, and the role of education. It also indicates the importance of education and how the families attach meaning to it.

6.2 Mobility Motivators: Personal Desire (Kase Shudan) and Existing Structures

The data indicates that almost all the students had a plan for studying abroad (niyati dar khorija tahsil kardan doshtam). Students’ testimonies connect the mobility process and their motivation for education, choices and, their decision to connect a significant link to their geographical locations (rural or urban), their social status (intelligentsia or ordinary man), working in the ministry or being a student. Students underlined some factors that impacted their motivation to Japan and I structured them under two main themes: personal desire and existing structure that become mobility motivators for students:

6.2.1 Personal Desire: To Become the Shaper of One’s Own Destiny (Kase Shudan)

Although most ideas are universal, they originate from specific cultural contexts. My findings show that one such cultural concept, that of kase shudan (becoming the shaper of one’s own destiny) emerged as central to understanding the motivations and experiences of individuals is cited by students as a motivating factor.

The local concept of kase shudan (becoming the shaper of one’s own destiny) is a motivator and it becomes even more important as they move out. It is, an intrinsic value that becomes particularly important to students as they move out of their localities and are exposed to geographical separation from family and locality as well as to new cultural experiences. It motivates individuals to move from one socio-economic position to another.
When I was a student and received help from my family I did not understand what kase shudan means. My parents always encouraged me to study hard in order to become somebody. I enjoyed my life when I was a student, but after finishing I could not find a proper job and realized that I had lost so much and I needed to work hard to become somebody. I moved to Moscow and there, every single day I remembered what my parents told me (Hamid, 2016).

This testimony shows that notion of kase shudan is taught in the family and emphasized by relatives and even teachers in this particular context. It also points to “how subjects experience and define” the process of mobility and “moments that leave positive and negative marks on the [students] lives” (Denzin, 2001, p. 41).

Mobility of students is driven by kase shudan which is likened to social mobility (individual, educational, economical and geographical mobility aspects). Those participants who had an intention to shape and change their destiny looked at education as one of the best solutions.

Everything depends on family upbringing (tarbiyai oila). My father (khudorahmati/may peace be upon him) was very strict person. He wanted us to work hard, to learn well and to become somebody sohibi khud shavem [...] he said that you should become somebody, you should build your life, you should study well, you should look after yourself. This leads us to continue our [hinting to his brothers] education [...]. My father suggested me not to go to Moscow to become a labor migrant and work in dirty job but for me to start my MA from September [...] (Kuibek, 2016).

For Kuibek to continue his education in Japan it is connected to the notion of kase shudan. Within this general term of fulfilling his self-realization, for Kuibek, Japan is the only country that is developed and at the same time keeps its cultural values. Second, the notion was also found within the area the person lives. Local and geographical conditions also play a role in
shaping the concept of *kase shudan* that in turn shapes the person’s motivation and influences the student’s educational mobility trajectory. Students are encouraged to move out to become the master of self that indicates the impact of the new environment on the element of self. The environment can also be broad: not only the geographical area but their access to school, specific program and new geographical location. This becomes a springboard for the student towards self-fulfillment or self-realization and was emphasized by majority of students (Bahrom, 2017; Fez, 2017; Jalil, 2016; Khon, 2017; Qaisar, 2017; Zafar, 2017; Zehni, 2017). Kuibek, who emphasized the significance of *kase shudan* in their life, linked it with the importance of education in general and in particular to international education (Khotun, 2016; Mullo, 2016; Jalil, 2016, Sayob, 2016, Anvor, 2017; Toqat, 2017).

The notion and connection between *kase shudan* and material fulfilment becomes more recognizable and noticeable after the collapse of the Soviet Union and civil war of Tajikistan. This was noticeable when the gap between the poor and rich grew, or quality of life between qualified teaches and business persons or migrants become visible and pushed toward the recognition that catalyzed this recognition of this idea and its use in everyday discourse. Perhaps, this was because teachers were not supported in their task with proper material, remunerations, and pedagogy.

I planned to leave to Moscow but at the airport a person from my village handed a letter to me. My father sent me a letter. That time we did not have mobile phone or any other easy way of communication. In his message my father said that “as a father my advice to you do not go to Moscow. You will be lost. You will become a slave. Come back and continue your education.” I went and applied to an MA program. Otherwise my aim was to go and earn money but his message changed my whole life (Kuibek, 2016).

Students see the significance of continuing education located in their family values (Kuibek, 2016; Karim, 2016; Mullo, 2016; Khurmo, 2017; Zafar, 2017; Olim, 2017; Zanjir,
In essence, the family value of the importance of education took them far from their home country towards Japan:

Now I think and am really grateful to my parents. They were the ones who pushed me to do well in my education. I left my village to go to another village as there was a very good public school (Zohir, 2017).

My father said, “the world is not growing but population is growing. If you seek out knowledge, nobody can take it from you. Rather your knowledge can save you!” The value of becoming the shaper of our [siblings] and our own destiny was emphasized in the family by my father (Sayob, 2016).

Mobility to Japan is to improve oneself educationally, even as this testimony shows, to put education above immediate economic gain. It is also clear that while students value the quality of self-realization, they continue to be concerned with the family and its fortunes, with younger siblings whom they wish to see flourish as they feel they have been able to do so. They see that self-realization is equal sometimes to the sacrifices and challenges that their family went through.

I was lucky that I could finish my university and got my BA diploma but my oldest brother could not finish his university. Immediately after the civil war he applied but life was hard. My parents could not support him financially. My two youngest brothers are students and I support my student brothers. I suggest they learn the language and find their way (Mullo, 2016).

Kase shudan is recognized in the local context as implying the ability to act, and this finding also reveals that the notion can be contextualized by circumstances. The idea of kase shudan overlaps with status, dignity, economic circumstances, social networks, and higher positions. As Karim, a young government official in a government institution puts it:
My father always suggested and even warned me to get my international degree before I get married. Although, I work in a very good position, education is a key in my family (Karim, 2016).

To me, my aunt is the one who made me who am I today. Both my parents do not work and my aunt paid for my education from early childhood until now. She now encourages me to support my brothers and sisters and also my aunt and uncle’s brothers and sister, so mostly my responsibility falls on teaching the English language to all of them… (laugh). She pushes us to find out our position in society. (Odil, 2017).

Drawing from the findings, I would define it within this thesis related to the context, as upward movement be it socially, economically or politically that is based on personal desire and family values. The data suggests that the notion of kase shudan seems to be to do one’s best, to move one level up, to be different from those who have less then you and equal or even better than the ones who are doing well. It implies striving for betterment:

I was always guided by my parents that I need to become somebody. My neighbors always were a good example for me to see and try not to be like some of them (Khotun, 2016).

It is the obligation passed from generation to generation; a thinking and internal search which leads to self-fulfillment. The notion is also connected to personal desire to do good, to improve and to be an ‘ethical person’ which is passed from parents to their children.

Altogether, kase shudan implies maturity, confidence, self-resilience and being in control of one’s own destiny and has an element of being recognized in the community.

6.2.2 The Role of Agency and Family Considerations

The exercise of a student agency begins from their home country and expands in the international arena. Discussions revealed that prior to their education in Japan students were
already exercising agency in making decisions about their own life to become somebody (*kase shudan*).

Life was tough and I decided to work part time [although other students did not work] and earned my own money. I did not want to be a burden for my parents. I opened my own company as well as I studied very hard […] Now I support my brothers those who are now student in Dushanbe (Mullo, 2016).

While family influences are underscored, the data made clear that autonomy was also exercised in terms of students’ choices as to the subjects to study and even further, to continue their education abroad and to choices destination. These decisions were not dependent on family views or opinions but on personal choices. What is also important to note is that in some cases, students were aware that their parents were not sufficiently familiar and experienced about the new, changed educational landscape in the new system rather, they were victims of new changes and their children were faster to adapt to the new situation.

My parents live in the village. They sent me to Dushanbe to apply to any faculty to continue my education. I was not a successful candidate to study in the English language Faculty. After failing, I decided to apply to Japanese language Faculty, as I liked Japanese culture such as karate since early childhood. […] When I applied to Japan, my parents did not know about my decision. Even if I told, them they would not know about Japan and they would tell me ‘this is your choice and you know better what to do’ (Sayob, 2016).

During Soviet times, the younger families would be supported in their material life by their parents and through being given a stable job by the government, but all of this social security net collapsed. On the other hand, the challenges that people faced after the civil war led them to take new firm steps that in turn led to changed actions. The students’ voices show how young people make choices about their professional life which leads to the change (Hamid, 2016; Mullo, 2016;
Sayob, 2016; Safar, 2017; Toqat, 2017). In the post-conflict situation, younger generations had greater autonomy in decision making but were considerate of their family income and other family issues.

When I went to Dushanbe from my village, I wanted to apply to Slavonic University to study International Communication but I found it too expensive. Then I thought of my father [that he cannot pay for it]. Then I applied to Technological University and studied for free (Safar, 2017).

It is also the changed situation and new global opportunities in local places that required new and different qualifications. In most cases, during Soviet times, people had limited choices and their family members made decisions on what profession they should chose.

I felt I am growing and I need to work in a better job position. There was a very good opportunity to work UNDP but there were two main requirements: one should either have 8 years’ experience or hold an MA degree. After finishing I want to work in a better job position (Khotun, 2016).

Khonum negative experience, the lack of opportunity, pushed her to make the decision to continue her MA. The testimonies reveal individuals chose their own behavior. Students went through some experiences that changed their worldview about the importance of education in their lives and for their country.

6.2.3 The Role of Gender: Personal Desire, Barriers, and Support

I now turn to the gendered aspect of mobility motivation. Although gender was not the focus of this thesis, the interview revealed some gender and educational aspects in the context of Tajikistan. The gender picture in Tajikistan is very complicated due to the overlay of Soviet ideology. It is Soviet legacy and at the same time it is the civil war that changed the culture. The
gender situation is complicated, nuanced and contradictory in Tajikistan. It is not uniform; there are gendered differences within regions and families. Women are pertinent to motivation; they help explain the family role in pushing education. The Tajiks, like everyone else, carry those contradictions within them.

In the context of Tajikistan, the woman is considered to be the custodian of family values, in particular family honor, they are the gatekeepers and the protectors of tradition. The notion of protector of tradition is mostly linked to *poki/tozagi* (purity), *fakhr* (pride) and family *obru/etibor* (dignity) (see Appendix 4). What is interesting is that mothers mostly try to keep and continue family dignity by protecting the honor of the girls. For some, going abroad or even travelling longer distances locally seems to be a threat.

Protection also means handing down the family tradition and teaching their daughters to be obedient daughters, sisters, and wives. However, in the process of globalization and the new social changes, mothers are changing their views and pushing their daughters to continue their education. The mothers are becoming the catalyst for change in gender roles. The female students, whom I interviewed, shared their stories about how their mothers played a role in educating their daughters, even though they themselves were homemakers. A common perception is that those mothers, who have gone through higher education, are supportive of their daughters acquiring higher education as opposed to those who did not attain tertiary education. But my data suggests that, in most cases, it is the mothers are the ones who push the boundaries of traditional thinking and seek to change the lives of their daughters.

My mother continuously shares her experience concerning her education. She said, she was very active at school and wanted to continue her education but she was not allowed to continue her education. Instead, she promised, “that she would educate her daughters if God grants her daughters.” She is a very strong woman and she is a role model to all of us [all her daughters]. We are five sisters and all of us continued to higher education,
finished university in different fields. Even, now she supports me to continue my education here in Japan (Farishta, 2016).

The data also seems to indicate that the lack of choices creates resilience and call for action. At the same time, women see that education liberates them and they gain their freedom although sometimes education cannot guarantee the freedom they wished to gain. Sometimes difficult situations can result in building resilience. Previously a mother’s dependency on her husband’s decisions did not take her confidence. Rather her role became crucial in pushing her daughters to be independent. When mothers see that education can make them somebody by educating their children, in particular, their daughters can shape their own destiny. Zebi explained her own source of motivation:

My father is a man with a big position. My mother is also an educated woman but my father did not allow my mother to work rather he preferred her to be a housewife. His duty took him to different places and my mother followed him wherever he went but after all her travels with my father; she realized that it is important for women to gain education to be free. Women should not sacrifice their education and profession. Therefore, my mother was the one who supported me and supports me now in continuing my education here in Japan. She does not tell me what to study and she has given me educational freedom, to choose and to continue my studies. She does not encourage me to get married, yet (Zebi, 2016).

The testimonies show nuance, the educated grandmother who pushed her daughter and daughter in law and the mother held back from her education, who also pushed her daughter. Zebi’s mother’s mobility was a result of her circumstances rather than choices but the exposure to a different cultural view of women, shaped her life and she could influence her daughter’s educational life. The Soviet history also left, positive legacy on educating women. Although, in reality the majority of women were working in agriculture (particularly in the context of Tajikistan) but there were women who pursued their education. The system allowed women travel
to Moscow and continue their education. Those who studied in Moscow they became role models not only among family members but also among the larger community of Tajikistan. Moscow was the most prestigious place and a dream for many people:

You know my grandmother was my role model. She pushed my mom and pushed me to become who I am today. She was a learned woman and she studied in Moscow. She was very strong in character and very kind in heart (Zarifa, 2017).

Zarifa proudly talks about her grandmother and her role in shaping their family life. In particular, her role in the life of Zarifa’s mother and herself. Zarifa is proud of her grandmother and the legacy she left. What is interesting, in the case of Zebi compared to Zarifa, is that informal mobility played a role in her life.

Digging deeper, it was striking to me that, the inequality in the society originates from the family and from the roles ascribed to sons and daughters. The son is seen as superior to a daughter but the daughter’s attitude and behavior can be the source of sharmandagi (shame) or fakhr (pride) in the family. A girl is not supported and respected the same as male member in some families, but a daughter can change the family obru/etibor (dignity). I wonder why sons and daughters are not treated equally. Khotun describes the perception, more specifically; she calls it the “Tajik culture” is different in terms of their attitude to their daughters and sons. For Khonum being the only child in the family played a positive role in her educational journey:

If I had a brother my life would be totally different. My family would follow the Tajik culture of educating their son and not encouraging me to continue my education. This is because of their idea that their son will look after them in future and their daughter will get married (Khonum, 2017).

However, the different participants’ testimonies reveal that there is not ‘one’ Tajik culture. There are Tajik cultures depending on a family’s educational background, life history background,
and geographical area. My own experience also shows this; there was no differentiation in how my brothers and sisters and I were treated. Khonum further admits that:

Two extreme groups are emerging after the collapse of the Soviet Union and conflict in Tajikistan; one that allows their daughters to take benefit of these new opportunities. There is another group who are extreme; keep their daughters at home. Who demolishes the rights of women? It is women themselves [referring to mothers-in-law] (Khonum, 2017).

During Soviet rule there was an emancipation of women although under the surface, cultural norms persisted. The data suggests that the civil war also impacted cultural norms and the culture holds both contradictions in balance and in flux. What her testimony points to, is that culture is also dynamic and it changes as a result of political situations. However, cultural change occurs in response to other socio-political changes. The two emerging extreme groups also legitimize their views on the basis of their culture and tradition, yet culture is constantly evolving and changing to new practices.

6.2.4 Circle of Friendship: Awareness Zone

It was also interesting to explore what else could lead to greater mobility of students and for selecting specific countries. The notion of ‘friend circles’ or “awareness zone” (Gonzales et al., 2011) indicates “facilitating the social mobility of” students, friends and colleagues (Velayutham & Wise, 2005, p.31). As Safar’s testimony shows:

One of my relatives studied in Japan. He told me that Japan is one of the best options equal to Western countries. My worry was about Japanese language. When we learned about International Economics, I learned about Japan’s economic system. It was already something that increased my interest towards Japan. However, my concern was that I could not go to Japan because I did not know the Japanese language (Safar, 2017).
Drawing from data, observations and anecdotes such information does not spread among wider groups of society but is kept within the small circle of friends and relatives. It almost resonates with Levitt’s (2001) study of the Boston community that divisiveness happens in host countries but my study shows that divisiveness and hierarchies start from the home country. From my observations in the context and discussions with students and some officials in Tajikistan, I found that limited or fragmented networks of international students exist but operate in some exclusivity. Information is not spread amongst people in general but is shared among various selected small groups of friends, colleagues, and relatives.

You know most of the time they [leadership of his university] do not inform people openly about opportunities abroad. It remains only among their relatives but somehow, fortunately, I found leaflet about the program in Japan and then I applied (Odil, 2016).

Japanese language learners and also government officials pointed to the importance of their friends and colleagues who already knew about the context. They supported them throughout the process application forms as well.

I applied for 3 years and was not successful. Last year I asked my colleagues who already studied in Japan and those who were students in Japan to guide me with my proposal and they supported me through their constructive feedback (Zafar, 2017).

Some of the students who went back (after their studies) became the key motivators and mentors for their intimate circle of friends guiding their search: the awareness space allowed new students to become more focused, directed and prepared to apply and study in Japan and the word spread among their relatives, friends and neighbors.
Recently one parent contacted me. I did not know him before but he is from our region and I was wondering how he found my contact information. He asked me how I came to Japan. I told him about our school [Hotam and P.V.] and later he contacted me and asked me about school contacts. His son also wants to study in Japan and that is why he wants to apply to study in our school in Hotam and P.V. (Fez, 2017).

Previous students were role models for us. They shared their experiences with us and at the same time encouraged us to apply (Dovud, 2017).

For some students, not only Tajikistani students in Japan were role models for them, but those students who studied abroad in different countries such as India, Australia, the U.K and the U.S. were also the reference points. Anyone who had gone to study abroad became a reference point.

One student from our school [from one small village] went to India and the whole village and school were talking about him. Teachers used him as example and he became a role model for us (Khovar, 2017).

Anvor (2017) also shares a similar experience:

When I was a secondary student, one student from our village studied in Australia and he did his MA degree there around 1997-1998. After his education in Australia, he came back to Tajikistan. He came and talked to us, encouraged us to work hard, learn the English language and said, “I can guide you how to study at the University of Australia.” In that moment the desire to study English language increased and I wanted to learn the language to continue my educational search abroad (Anvor, 2017).

Those who studied abroad already informally passed the importance of learning new foreign languages. Acquiring new languages is seen as a bridge to the international world and a brighter future. However, in Tajikistan not every young person or families know about educational opportunities in Japan. Those students who have access to information not only on the internet but
also through institutions, friends or relatives understand and foster applying to Japanese universities as Suhrob indicates that “Japanese soft power [Japan’s programs and presence] is not yet known among the Tajikistani community” (Suhrob, 2016). This information shows that at the grassroots level build community as they grow internationally. Testimonies indicate that small circle groups who become motivators and mentors for each other.

6.3 Contextualizing Education: Collapse, Emerging Structures, Challenges and New Opportunities

Political instability and regional conflict led to domestic mobility or resulted in internal displacement of people: and ensured that involuntary mobility became a new life pattern for people. In the absence of choices, lack of resources, insecurity, and collapsed structures that attended the collapse of the Soviet Union the civil war and its aftermath. Students moved from one location to other in the absence of educational opportunities, constrained by political, economic and even geographical remote locations. Living in a small village means there are no opportunities for acquiring a good education and employment. In some villages, there is no cinema, theatre, or even a sports area to be engaged in and learn something at the non-formal level. However, it is important to note that even the furthest region had schools and access to education (Bliss, 2006; Niyozov & Bahryn, 2006): the issue is one of quality education. As already discussed, almost 72 percent of Tajikistan population live in rural areas and are indicative of the opinion of many young people in rural areas today.

113 Regions within Tajikistan: Badakhshan, Khatlon, Sughd and also here the notion of Gharm came out as separate region.
6.3.1 Education in the Moment of Crises: Involuntary Mobility

Students become geographically mobile\textsuperscript{114} not only because of previous mobility experiences (Carlson, 2013) or because of transition from one location to other but it was actually involuntary mobility. The civil war created a situation of involuntary mobility further disrupting the lives of numerous families, already anchorless after the collapse of social structures in the post-Soviet era as well as the economy, resulting in the sudden absence of choices and resources (Kuibek, 2016; Khonum, 2017; Zehn, 2017).

After finishing grade 9 I left my village and went to Dushanbe. I applied to Suvorov\textsuperscript{115} school but war started and I went back…I did not have any other choice. Then I applied to the history faculty in my region (Kuibek, 2016).

Because of the civil war my brother could not continue his education and still the result is following his life (Mullo, 2016).

The impact of the civil war, political instability increased mobility of people internally and abroad (Burrell & Anderson, 2008). His experience was echoed by almost all participants who found their life plans were dramatically changed by the impact of the civil war. They do not find that this impact has been washed away with the signing of the peace treaty. What their testimonies about that time do attest to very strongly, is the continued importance of education during these moments and how education remained a motivating factor for people to keep their hopes up for the future (see Niyozov, 2006; Waljee, 2010; Faucher, 2017).

During the civil war we tried to help our family as we understood through the kind of situation our parents are experiencing. We collected bottles from the garbage and sold

\textsuperscript{114} About 72 percent of the population of Tajikistan lives in the rural areas and in the search of better education and better-quality of life. They seek better education in different locations such as regional and administrative centers.

\textsuperscript{115} Suvorov Military School was one type of military boarding school. Particularly, male teenagers could continue their education in this school.
them. However, my mother always suggested that “education should be the first priority in your life, regardless of life conditions” I promised to be an educated man (Rasul, 2017).

We 3-4 kids shared one book with each other. The books were torn but we mended them and shared with each other (Mullo, 2016).

The findings also reveal how people coped during the civil war and how it changed their life direction, particularly the course of their professional lives. The voices attest to the discontinuity of the student life plan, profession and dreams but at the same time demonstrate an underlying resilience in the face of traumatic change in the determination to continue their education and change through professional goals or adapt them even in the moments of crises.

The narratives demonstrate their strength in coping with adverse conditions and their flexibility and proactiveness in the switching of courses and careers when necessary. The narratives of the students reveal that the effect of civil war is long lasting and feels as if present.

During the civil war there was no electricity and it impacted us in our homework. We used the candle which also did not give enough light and all siblings surrounded one candle to prepare our homework. Even at that time the candle was deficit (Zehni, 2017).

“Language learning” was emphasized by several students (Olim, Zafar, 2017; Rasul, Hamid, 2016). Some participants could not improve their language skills due to having grown up in rural areas in poorer conditions than those who lived in urban areas but again, in their new life experiences. This is because language teachers, and in particular Russian teachers, left schools during and after the civil war from rural areas and students’ language learning suffered as a result. Drawing from the findings, they recognized the importance of language because of the existing global institutions and new job positions in local areas. Post conflict studies also demonstrate that the students do not only carry memories but results of the war:
You know it is because of the war that we remained as “half baked” [meaning did not develop properly] I mean we did not learn anything deeply. We [students] could not develop well; if we learned any language we did not learn it well, as of lack of teacher or the existing situation. Most of the time students came to school hungry, they did not have anything to eat for breakfast, and how could it be possible to concentrate? We [children] worked a lot in the field to help our parents (Sayob, 2016).

Although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation, further examination of education for those who managed during the conflict to go abroad and those who stayed at home or could not leave would be interesting. The students found the domestic mobility in a post-conflict context was harder than international mobility which was emphasized by some students (Yusuf, 2016; Sayob, 2016; Mullo, 2016; Zafar, 2017).

The hard life during and after the civil war, particularly my life as a student at that moment changed me a lot [here pointing towards unfair treatment]. It hindered my confidence and did not allow me to nurture my thinking. During that time the connection between regions also was not good. Some groups abused new coming students a lot. They stopped us and asked how much money we have. It was hard. Nevertheless, I should also underline that today it is different, (sigh…) changed. Today, the life of a student is much better and our stories for some students could be just stories (laugh…) (Kuibek, 2016).

It is also clear from their testimonies that these challenges made them strong, resilient and determined to fight for change. Education remained for them the source of change. Life became unpredictable and the pressures of life affected the codes of moral behavior and cultural codes were under stress. During interviews, students emphasized that “Tajikistan people were very kind hearted, very respective towards each other but now we are changed. The impact could be the civil war and also today’s difficult life” (Zafar, 2017). They (students and those people who were on the move) became home foreigners. The data shows that intra-regional migration was more
difficult than inter-regional migration. The students’ voices reveal that rural area barriers can become a significant part of a student’s motivation.

One important factor that contributed to students staying in education was the value, support and care of teachers (Faucher, 2017). It was a significant push for students to continue their education at that time when it was hardest to focus on school. However, fear and challenges were not only faced by students, but “…teachers were trying their best to teach but it was obvious that their thoughts were about safety and food even though they were trying to hide it” (Doro, 2017).

I remember the first of September very well. I could not go to school because I did not have new clothes to wear. What I did is: I rode my horse and went to the mountain. I cried the whole day there because I knew others are at school they are learning something but not me […] In the evening I met my teacher. He told me that “my son bacham it is your knowledge that is important not your clothes. I look forward to see you tomorrow at school.” His wards changed me and my life […] (Mullo, 2016).

The first of September in the context of Tajikistan is called day of knowledge “ruz donish” which is the beginning of the new school year. The life stories reveal there are life changing moments that comprise of many factors such as change in political situation that led to change in social life, poor economic situation and role of teachers beyond the classroom. Although most students were very young during the civil war the memories are imprinted in their minds. It is clear that the foundations for the wish to pursue further education were laid at that time. For many students, the search for knowledge and continuing their education was the only goal during civil war time because other life dreams changed or collapsed with the collapse of the Soviet Union or “war destroyed all hopes except one; only education was our hope for the future” (Kuibek, 2016).

Students who finished their secondary education before or during the civil war and were ready to go on to higher education at the end of the civil war now found that they now faced new big challenges: the result of the “transition” from communism and a command economy to a form
of capitalism and a market economy (Bruner & Tillet, 2007). That transition involved a huge shift on many fronts as an entire political, ideological, institutional system had to change and this had a massive impact on individuals in all areas of their lives, particularly the economic one.

### 6.3.1.2 Seeking for Quality and Patterns of Change: Voluntary Mobility

After the civil war, many qualified teachers could not stay in the system because the state could not pay them a living wage. They had to work in the “Bazaar” or to become labor migrants in Moscow. As the situation worsened, most “qualified teachers left schools” (Silova, 2011). The data reveals that students who refer to “Soviet teachers” are qualified and experienced teachers. There is a nostalgic looking back and connecting quality, qualification and good teachers to the Soviet period. However, I agree with Elliot and Tudge (2007, p.102) that “it would be misleading to provide an idealized picture of the earlier Soviet classroom”: the Soviet system of that time has been criticized for not allowing room for students’ individuality and hence creativity. The Soviet school system was rote learning and did not allow students creativity (Niyozov, 2006).

The case of Solim’s family illustrates the idea of teacher retention:

> My father was a university teacher and he could not tolerate the poor conditions that we faced after the civil war. You know, how much they earned during the Soviet time. He just simply moved to Moscow and now he is a teacher at a University in Moscow (Solim, 2017).

Historically, the role of the teacher has been emphasized in the classical literature and local proverbs such as *Qadri ustod az padar besh hast va Ustod az padar pesh hast* (the role of teacher is higher than that of the father). Those who started their education after independence confronted a drop in the quality of education and a lack of teachers at all levels of the system. The pursuit of quality education and qualified teachers led to increased mobility amongst people (village to village, village to district, district to city). This situation led families to make unprecedented
decisions to transfer their children to places with better education (villages, districts or town)\textsuperscript{116} to live with relatives and in hostels in order to continue their education.

I changed my school; left from one village to another because of not having good conditions at school and one did not have enough teachers. One year we had a physics teacher and the second year we did not, he/she left... Then I stopped going to that village because of the harsh winter, of avalanches and wolves I could not go there. When you live in one area you have a different mentality and when you move you will find there are different mentalities in the new areas within your country and outside […] (Rauf, 2016).

In the absence of qualified teachers many students from small villages moved to other bigger villages, districts, towns or cities. The absence of qualified teachers “was more pronounced in Tajikistan” as most became labor migrants in Moscow (Silova, 2009).

I studied in my village when one of my teachers came and told me about Hotam and P.V. gymnasium. There is a gymnasium in Tajikistan, which selected the best teachers of Tajikistan and a teacher from my village was selected to teach there. I applied to school and passed the examination when I was grade 6. I moved there and lived in the hostel […]. In 2007 I participated in one of the international Olympiads and earned a Golden Medal (Jalil, 2016).

To me this signaled the beginning of a new mobility pattern in the life of Tajikistani students. Before that, children aged 11 to 15, (grades 5 to 8) followed their parents; but now this pattern was reversed. Parents’ mobility was now based on the educational requirements of their children and in that sense, the children led and the parents followed.

We also lived in a remote place and at school we had computers but because of electricity we could not use computers. Usually, we [students] collected money and

\textsuperscript{116} Almost all undergraduate research participants and those students who were in the search of private schools experienced this pattern.
bought petroleum for electric generators to use computers. But I moved to Hojimirzo school and then Hotam and P.V. school which is in the capital [Dushanbe]. If I had continued my school where I lived, I would not have dreamt of going abroad and studying in Japan. Our public school could not provide up to date information (Nasullo, 2017).

I remember after the civil war there was an economic issue but one teacher opened his college inside the school in order to earn some money to help children to learn. He selected the best teachers and taught them Math, Chemistry, Physics and English language (Mullo, 2016).

The findings demonstrate that mobility patterns have changed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Until that time, mobility in pursuit of education started after student’s finished secondary education but the new trend is for students to become mobile from early age, at grade 5 or 6 within their district, region and cities. Local-to-local mobility increased because of lack of teachers.

6.3.2 Private Schools: New Idea and Old Teachers

As the quality of education in state schools continued to decline, one consequence in what was now a market economy was that new private schools emerged.

At regular public schools, there is not good education yet. If I finished that school, I would not dream about going abroad and studying in Japan. There is knowledge but not enough “Ilmeki kifoya nest.” Those kinds of schools do not develop language skills. There is no internet even. Most of the time we bought petrol for engines to use computer. At regular schools, you would not get enough information about the world. Information is not enough. There are two best schools Hojikamol and Hotam and P.V. (Zoir, 2017).
Good educational institutions become a ladder and a motivating factor for social and educational mobility of students. There are now some private schools\textsuperscript{117} that offer an international standard of education that allows students to prepare for studies abroad. These are only a handful of such schools which focus on developing language skills and teach specific subjects more in depth compared to public schools. There are students who study abroad who did not study at any private schools but the private school is a trampoline for the majority of students who can afford to study there. In addition, those who had ‘good quality education’ at school, found that they now faced another challenge at university level which was an additional reason for students to seek better opportunities.

When there was a civil war in the capital city in my region the life was better. There were challenges but in terms of education and studying, we did not have a problem. I moved from my village to another village to study in so-called college. After finishing my college, I came to Dushanbe [capital]. We went to Dushanbe together with my classmates. I wanted to be an engineer. I did not know where to apply, how to apply [the place and life is different from the region he comes from]. Finally, I applied to one subject Faculty [...] It was a little bit difficult. I also had very strong educational foundation, as our college was very strong. Coming to university, I realized the education is not challenging to learn something new. To me it seemed that I did not learn anything at university (Zafar, 2016).

The testimonies of students highlight the widening gap between some good private schools and declining standards of higher education. Universities were not ready to respond to the new ideas and new bright students who received their education in private schools equipped with comparatively updated information and new technology. Those who studied at private schools found that universities did not meet their expectations:

\textsuperscript{117} Turkish Lyceum (now banned), Hotam and P.V., Aga Khan Lycée, Presidential Lyceum, Hojimirzo, and some other boarding schools in Abdurahmoni Jomi, International School and etc.
Our boarding school was the best in our region. However, before applying to University I was concerned and I prepared so hard. I believed the University has high standard of education. Higher than secondary school. After going to university, I was disappointed with the quality of education and teaching (Qaisar, 2016).

With the establishment of good private schools that matched global educational standards, the possibility of pursuing higher education abroad became a real possibility. However, it is interesting to see how the ideas of mobility were impacted by international mobility within different generations. The reason why public schools of Hotam and P.V. or Turkish Lyceum become so popular is because students from these schools could compete globally and continue their education internationally:

I studied in my village until grade 7 then I applied to Turkish Lyceum the one in Tursunzade, after that I moved to Hojikamol Lytceum because this school focuses on mathematics and physics. After one year I moved to Hotam and P.V. school because I heard of its fame [Hotam P.V. Students from private school after finishing their high school can apply and pursue their undergraduate education in Japan] (Zohir, 2017).

Most students did not move only once to a new school but were continuously moving to find better schools, ones that promised a better future. What is important is that, immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union, education became more competitive and meritocratic. Students were selected through interviews and only the most talented students could get access to the above mentioned schools or programs. “Just one score could change the course of my life” stresses Safar (2016). The sudden unexpected changes which occurred after collapse became more pronounced as the government grappled with economic priorities in the transition to a market economy and educational reform was delayed. Students realized that most state schools could not prepare them for future jobs (Elliot & Tudge, 2007). As Safar attests, it is the institutional changes that exist in the local context which prepare students to compete globally. It
is clear from the data that and from early years, that students realize the importance of education in their own lives. Through private schools, the undergraduate students prepared locally by studying in specific schools purposefully in order to apply to come to Japan. The establishment of a new educational infrastructure also facilitated migration and mobility of the young generation.

6.3.3 NGO Institutions in Local Borders

For some NGO institutions, and international programs in local places that constituted an additional set are motivating factors for students to continue their education by crossing international borders. The motivation of students is closely linked to political structures as after the collapse of the Soviet Union the independent countries moved towards “outward-looking [or engaged in] international approaches” (Morgan & Kliucharev, 2012, p.6). For some Tajikistani students the existing Japanese programs that are actively working in Tajikistan another motivator and they wanted to explore deeper through studying in Japan (Mullo, 2016; Sayob, 2016; Farishta, 2016; Hamid, 2016).

Before going to Japan, I worked on one Japanese project and closely worked with Japanese people. My experience was inspirational for me to study in Japan (Zehni, 2017).

After university, I was working as a scientific researcher. To get my PhD from a university with comparatively higher ranking caused me to come to Japan. I had some cooperation with famous Japanese institutions [before coming to Japan] … In my family education is the priority and we all were influenced by my father (Saido, 2016).

The data speaks to the importance of new structures, institutions as motivating factors to encourage students to study internationally. International programs such as English language
courses in local places, programs such as AKHP,\textsuperscript{118} the presence of embassies and NGO programs\textsuperscript{119} expose students to possibilities beyond Tajikistan’s borders and hence contribute to their mobility motivations as well.

Although more could be done to strengthen this aspect of the co-operation “there is an understanding both in Japan and the majority of Central Asian countries [such as Tajikistan] that the potential for cooperation between Japan and Central Asian countries is not being fully and properly realized” (Dadabaev, 2016). Part of the problem is that retuning students find their qualifications are not recognized. However, in the neighboring countries such as Kyrgyzstan the Ministry of Education and Sciences officially recognized BA and MA diplomas and PhD foreign diplomats are under consideration (Thieme et al. 2013). In these circumstances, Tajikistan’s ambivalence leads to it losing potentially skilled qualified people.

The Project for Human Resource Development Scholarships by Japanese Grant Aid (JDS) that is collaborating with 12 countries\textsuperscript{120} such as Tajikistan is a significant contributor to human resource development in Tajikistan (see Section 3.1.3). The program aims to support and prepare young government officials as future leaders. For young Tajikistani government officials, the programs constitute as positive motivators to continue their education in Japan. Participants felt that this program, which has served to enhance the image of young government officials, is one reason why the number of interested young applicants to work in government institutions has increased as they see working in the government as a pathway to accessing international education (Solim, 2017).

\textsuperscript{118} The Aga Khan Humanities Program (AKHP), could be the best project in Tajikistan that develops academic writing skills and critical thinking.

\textsuperscript{119} Some students underlined that the presence of NGO programs (JICA, JICE, AKDN, ADB) allows students to be part of the programs in the local place and at the same time programs that connect them internationally.

It was a great opportunity for me as there were not too many applicants to apply for this position because it encourages specifically government employees and not everyone who is working in Ministerial positions. Of course, if I did not receive a scholarship with my salary I would not make it for 100 years. I applied 3 or 4 times/years in order to succeed and finally I did it (Zafar, 2017).

Almost all government officials agree that firstly, it was a great opportunity to pursue a higher education to do an MA. It was significant, but at the same time they agree that their MA and now PhD studies were paid for and was an important consideration in continuing their HE in Japan.

However, what is hidden within these discussions is the extent of competition for applicant to the program. Students admit that the key point in relation to these programs is that there is less competition for them.

Usually, other programs such as FLEX and DAAD that are nationwide and the competition is tough. JICE program is the only program that targets young government employees. Therefore, if you work hard there is a chance to be successful (Zafar, 2017).

Listening carefully to Zafar, it is clear he is implying that “fewer applicants” mean fewer contenders for limited scholarship places. The reduced competition leads to easier access for those who apply to international education which is fast becoming an important marker for success.

I have a family, children and as you know we do not receive a good salary so this opportunity was very unique in the sense that I could upgrade my knowledge and skills and again could come and work in my previous job. Although sometimes after two years’ experience abroad you do not find the same position as you had before, at least you have a secure job in the same institution (Shodi, 2016).
The testimonies above underscore the fact that government salaries are too low to enable young civil servants to engage in higher education themselves: winning a scholarship is essential if they are to study abroad in Japan.

Moreover, undergraduate students who particularly focus on natural sciences are more interested in studying in the U.S. and Russia as they look towards those countries that are strong in particular subjects such as physics or mathematics. Most of them have already attempted and applied to different cities of Russia such as Moscow and Petersburg. However, they change their plans because of the scholarship. In the case of Zohir below, the testimony shows that he studied one year in Petersburg and then came to Japan:

I applied to Petersburg and was successful but after one year when I received my results from Japan university. I made the decision; I should go out and see a different way of teaching and learning. I made this decision because I received a full-time scholarship. If I did not receive full time scholarship, I could not make it to Japan (Zoir, 2017).

Foreign policy considerations, it seems, are central to the furthering of education for some people, constituting yet another macro factor that impacts student mobility.

### 6.3.3.1 Country Reputation

The specific combination of previously outlined political, economic, infrastructural and socio-cultural factors (Chapter 3) allowed for the particular migration and development trajectories. The reputation of the international education and studying in Japan was important as an indicator of quality education that would result in a better employment opportunity. The majority of participants mention that country prestige is significant. It seems it is the country and not the specific university that is valued and most participants do not mention university but some
try to justify their choice of academic institution by describing their university as the best in Japan or the best in encouraging international students.

Our university in Japan was among 50 best universities (Anvor, 2017).

You know the university that I studied in Japan is among top 10 best universities in Japan (Zanjir, 2017).

Data indicates that mobility of students is not random even if their choices are subject to a series of macro factors such as access to supported education, the previous opportunity to study at a good school and so on. It is well thought and planned. Mazzarod and Soutar (2002) note, the reputation of the country can be a pull factor. The notion of Japan as a developed country seems to be an attractive choice for students to continue their education.

Japan is one of the best-developed countries in the world (Karim, 2016).

Japan is developed so you can learn a lot from the experience of Japanese people in Japan (Jalil, 2016).

The data point to the students’ observations and experiences, that Japan as being both developed and still keeping to its cultural values is a significant aspect for students:

Japan is highly developed country equal to the West but at the same time, it keeps its traditional values (Kuibek, 2016).

The testimonies above underscore the fact that government reputation also plays a significant role in their decisions to study in Japan.
However, there were some other students who preferred to study in other countries.

I preferred to study in the U.S. as I had experience there and I knew the context. I searched in U.K as well but they do not provide scholarships for MBA and when I applied to Japan I received the scholarship and was surprised… (Khotun, 2016).

I applied around 5 or 6 countries. My aim was to go and gain international education. I applied to America, U.K., Malaysia, Singapore, Japan and Kazakhstan. Finally, I choose Japan because of its culture. I watch Japanese animation therefore I wanted to see it with my own eyes (Suhrob, 2016).

However, what was interesting to learn was that those students who are proficient in English language did not seek only opportunity in Japan but their search was broader and their motivation was “packaged” meaning they wanted to study in a developed country, they wanted a quality education, programs that are not available in their home country, and they need a scholarship (Aidar, 2016, Fez, 2017; Khotun, 2016; Suhrob, 2016; Zarifa, 2017).

6.3.3.2 History of Japan: Post Conflict Issue Same as Tajikistan

The idea of how Japan recovered so quickly after the war was in the minds of most students who wanted to study the way of governance, education and its economic system.

Japan, like Tajikistan, has faced a post-conflict period. As I had an interest in post-conflict countries, it was an opportunity for me to study here and learn more about Japan’s development process during the post-conflict period (Olim, 2017).

Student motivation is not only about opportunity but goes deeper. For some, motivation is personal, mixed with professional. The numbers of post-conflict countries are many but those

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121 Suhrob, Personal interview with the author, August 2016.
countries which progressed and developed into world economic leaders are rare. The development of Japan after World War II makes it unique and becomes a motivating factor for some to continue their education and learn how this came about (Olim, 2017; Shodi, 2016; Safar, 2016; Zanjir, 2017). For them, this is also an important aspect of national recovery and development that they want to learn about and contribute for the development of their own country.

6.3.3.3 Learning Beyond the Classroom: Cultural Experience

Japanese culture also was cited as a significant motivating factor for students in choosing Japan. Those students who came to Japan in 2010 to 2013 did not know enough about Japan. Although most of them mentioned they knew about the development of Japan students did not have information about Japanese culture. Subsequent students chose Japan purposefully as they received first-hand information from those who had already studied in Japan. Almost all students mentioned the positive attitude and respect of people towards others (foreigners) as something that impressed them and added to their wanting to study and stay in Japan.122 Their testimony acknowledges that “education is not limited to standardized, institutionalized forms of learning, but encompasses other formative experiences as well,” (Olwig & Valentin, 2014, p.247) such as experiencing the culture and governance beyond their class. The attitude of kindness and respect are the key characteristics that the students valued in Japanese culture

the only thing is that they [Japanese people] do not pray but they [Japanese people] act according to Islamic tenet that is required from Muslims [highlighted idea of honesty, punctuality, kindness] (Jalil,2016).

My experience in Japan shaped me. It helps one to reflect not only on their own personal development, it also helps one to reflect on their role as a human being

122 This is history of Tajikistani students in Japan, it is possible other students who had the history of colonization may find it different as do Tajikistani students who go to Moscow.
[again emphasis is on values as human being] (Zanjir, 2017).

The students felt that their culture had been similar to Japan. Now they feel that the Tajik values system has changed a lot, people have become more aloof rather than polite (Zafar, 2017; Anvor, 2017; Kuibek, 2016; Farishta, 2016). The data also recorded some experiences where Japanese reserve meant that it took time for a new person to understand the culture and appreciate it.

Japanese people are very shy and I think it gives a very negative impression until you understand them. In my previous experience as an exchange student in America I found people in America are very sociable but coming to Japan during the first few months it was very difficult for me to understand people and society, because nobody talks to you (Khotun, 2016).

However, the one student who studied in Japan for two years and left to go to America found the reverse to be true: “it takes time to understand what kind of culture is here [in America]” (Khonum, 2017). Nevertheless, what is interesting about attitude and culture is that almost all the students mentioned the humbleness and tolerance of people in different situations and different institutions like the government system.

6.3.4 Scholarship and Pursue of Education Globally

Sayob (2017), an interviewee mentioned that “now there is a crisis in Moscow and I have to help my nephew who is a student in Moscow” meaning that he sends some of his scholarship money to his nephew. The testimony of Sayob emphasizes the importance of scholarships and how scholarship allowances are saved and remitted back to the home countries to support siblings or relatives to continue their education.
In the case of Toqat (2017), his scholarship is shared with his family in Tajikistan: he has three children and parents whom he looks after.

[...] also my aim was to do [an internationally recognized] MA, and fortunately there was a program, opportunity and scholarship. Otherwise, my position was very good and I earned a very good salary, but it was always my intention to do an MA (Kuibek, 2016).

6.3.4.1 Visa and Part Job Time Policies

One other reason why students choose Japan is because the processes of entry have been easier for them: visas are easily obtainable and that is an important consideration at a time when the West is focused on keeping people from certain parts of the world and certain faiths, out of their borders.

I wanted to go to America. Applying and getting a visa was very hard. I did not obtain my visa. I wanted to continue my studies… (Safar, 2017).

If the process of obtaining a visa obtaining was the same as America, some would try to go to America and not Japan. The choice of America comes first because of Japanese language, as some people incorrectly assume that knowing Japanese is a requirement for studying there.

Policies that allow students to study part time and work part time are also significant in attracting students, particularly Japanese language learners who know that they can work part time and pay for their education in Japan. Those students who have a Japanese language background also stress the importance of improving their language competency in the original country where it is universally spoken. The reason for wanting to improve their language is also linked to the issue of their home country and availability of part time policies in the host country. In the case of Hamid, he is in a difficult situation as he finished Tajikistan university without gaining sufficient
knowledge and remains unemployed. The notion of quality of education was highlighted by most of the students.

After finishing my university in Tajikistan, I could not find a job there with a Japanese company. I knew it was because of my poor Japanese language skills. My Japanese was not to the level that I could find a good job at any Japanese organization. I wasted my time and my money during my university studies […] Therefore I left to go to Moscow to earn money. Life was tough […]. After going back to Tajikistan from Moscow, I was tired of sleeping as I did not know what to do. I could not find any job. Luckily, I found a program and applied to the Japanese language program (Hamid, 2016).

After coming to Dushanbe [from the region,] I did not know where to apply or what to do. I wanted to apply to the English faculty but I was not successful. Then I had a choice between Korean and Japanese. I decided to study in the Japanese faculty and today I do not regret it (Qaisar, 2017).

The availability of Japanese language in the post-conflict situation of Tajikistan was also important. However, the part time job opportunity was not mentioned. The data also speaks to the new opening of borders and opportunities through Tajikistan and Japanese foreign policy and international relationships. Language became the bridge between local and international. A hope arises that can take them beyond their context, life conditions and opportunities they have available.

6.4 Summary

The data on what motivates students to continue their education in Japan reveals that there are multiple layers of mobility motivators. The key mobility motivator or mobility driver is personal desire. This desire is often nurtured and encouraged by families from childhood times and student mobility begins early in Tajikistan with its post-Soviet, post conflict legacy still impacting the quality and availability of good education. The mobility
of students does not begin with coming to Japan. Nor does it end with receiving their university degree or moving from rural to urban areas of their country rather rural to rural or rural to urban mobility is the beginning of further mobilities into new areas of exploration.

An important part of their mobility experience is the idea of *Kase Shudan* which is a motivator that develops further when they are in a new context, away from family and familiar networks, supports, localities. They must create this for themselves. Personal desire cannot not be fulfilled without other key factors including mobility drivers in place. There are new public schools, NGOs, new international programs, students and relatives as reference points.

The significant aspect of students’ own perceptions of their mobility, which the data underscores, is that students are taking action and responsibility for their own lives and education. It is the embedded notion of shaping one’s own destiny which is a significant factor for students wanting to become mobile. In the context of Tajikistan, it is also important to understand how the political situation can influence mobility, both involuntary and voluntary mobility, within communities and the mindset of the younger generation.

Students mobility is a process, not a product. The study abroad carries with it the symbolic meaning of growth “*peshrafta.*”

The next chapter continues to look at findings but this time from the life trajectories of students and their experiences while in Japan.
CHAPTER VII – EDUCATIONAL MOBILITY TRAJECTORIES

7.1 Introduction

The last chapter examined student motivation and the related issues of push-pull factors that contributed to their mobility, the life changes in Tajikistan that framed their educational choices and decisions, and their own perceptions of how their mobility served to help them to become the decision makers of their own destiny within macro and micro parameters. This chapter goes beyond the educational space to capture their wider experiences once in Japan. It covers, amongst other aspects, the impact of their marital status, the experiences of interacting with Japanese people, and their experiences on their return. All this can be better understood through exploring their personal desire and professional life trajectories and how that is shaped or transformed in the new environment. As Hohr (2013, p.1) attests, experience is “between human being and the world… [and] it is a communicative, historic and cultural phenomenon.” It is important to note, however, that when speaking of ‘life trajectories’ in this thesis, I am confining that to those experiences particularly linked to the participants’ educational trajectories and experiences; an exploration of a full life biography of each student is beyond the scope of this study.

The data discussed in the last chapter reveals that student experiences are rooted in their home environments and that these home influences continue to operate even in the new environment they find themselves in. Indeed, for some, there is a link between their previous international mobility experiences and between their home and other host countries. At the same time, it is one component of post conflict development (Junne & Verkoren, 2005) that each individual seeks to be recognized as an equal member to the rest of the society. They compare, connect, and contrast their experiences through looking from the local lens or the particular personal history they carry with them. Educational mobility is not a new phenomenon but within the broader context of coming to Japan to study, each student’s experience is also a unique one.
The students’ perceptions of their life trajectories are drawn from their particular background: their age, previous education, professional experience, years spent in Japan, Japanese language ability, the context they came from, gender, and marital status. All of these are factors that influence their experiences and expectations.

Table 7.1 demonstrates that there are several factors and, concurrently, they can be understood as lenses that shape students’ experiences.

Table 7.1 Lenses to Understand Life Trajectories of Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTORS</th>
<th>HOW THEY AFFECT THEIR TRAJECTORY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LANGUAGE ABILITY</td>
<td>Impacts employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERNAL MOBILITY</td>
<td>Helps them to go abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION BACKGROUND</td>
<td>Provides them with choices on mobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREVIOUS INTERNATIONAL</td>
<td>More confident to move and also compare their mobility experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPERIENCE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YEARS THEY HAVE SPENT IN JAPAN</td>
<td>Impacts their network, language ability, and employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENDER</td>
<td>Impacts their mobility perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARITAL STATUS</td>
<td>Impacts their decisions about their future (i.e. thinking about better future of their children)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each student has his or her own main factor. For some students, Japan was the first international country they had been to and this group of students’ explanations of their experience of being in Japan is different from those of students who have already had previous experience of
international education elsewhere. This group always draws connections between those experiences they had previously and new experiences. The point of comparison for the former students is Tajikistan; for the latter, it is the last country they had been in. Some of them are very aware of the very different contexts of Japan and Tajikistan and remarked that “it is not fair to compare Tajikistan and Japan as our country is a very young independent country but we see the life of newly developing country from developed countries’ eye” (Aidar, 2016).

It is also important to focus on the experience of students from a lens other than the local-international student dichotomy, because a student is also a parent, brother/sister, relative, neighbor, friend and daughter/son of somebody, and this breadth of identities is something that is often overlooked in research studies on student mobility. The student’s life reality is more complex than just being a student.

Three main themes emerged from the interviews concerning students’ experiences. The first, on broader impact of international education; the second focuses on the students’ part time jobs; and the third, on significance of brain waste in the host country. The opening up of new and further avenues of mobility created new mobility path for students. The majority of students identified their experience of being in Japan as a positive one in terms of attitude of people (respect, kindness), governance (democracy and meritocracy) but it is important to recognize that these experiences are dependent on each student.

The experiences of those students who studied in post-independence period (for example: undergraduate students and exchange students in Japan) as opposed to those students who studied during the Soviet period, is different. An initial analysis of the data appears to show that the younger students spend their time in making friends, visiting different places, and learning Japanese but the older students are more concerned about their educational status.
When I applied to MA program and become master student then I realized that I have to prioritize my time and to be more focused with my studies, as it is now different life, no more exchange student life (Khayam, 2017).

Being exchange student does not require from you anything. First it is frustrating as you want to study something but there is nothing for you. However, later you realize that it is important to collaborate with different people, make friends, participate in cultural shows immerse in the culture, however MA is different and difficult (Suhrob, 2016).

I did not have much time to learn about culture, to learn the language although I really wished to learn a little bit. I was very busy with my studies (Shodi, 2016).

The data also demonstrates that these differences (serious/less serious) are more pronounced between exchange students and degree students. Some participants experienced both being an exchange student and later becoming Master of Arts students, attest that there were several students who started as exchange students and then decided to continue studying for an MA. For them, the dual experience was invaluable as in the first year when they were able to learn the language and absorb the culture (without the pressure of having to earn credits), which equipped them with confidence when they came to do their degrees.

On the other hand, those with a Soviet education background (usually the older students) commented that “it was very long gap, after 10 years of my higher education then I applied again to continue my studies [to do an M.A.]. It was very hard; therefore, I had to work a lot and spend more time to grasp the meaning of what we have learnt” (Zafar, 2017). Although, Zafar recognized that his education background was very strong, he found that engaging with a different education system was hard for him to cope with. As for students who studied in post-independence era, some of them had an experience of a different educational system in private schools, which prepared them better for their studies in Japan. It seems therefore that both age and the quality of education received plays a part in how quickly students adapt to the new situation. This also speaks to the almost radical changes in the education system in Tajikistan, outlined in
Chapter (Context 4; Findings 7) and discussed further in terms of the impact of macro factors on the lives of students in the last Chapter 8 (Section 8.5).

It is interesting to see how educational mobility impacts student experience (Section 6.2) and how, in turn, students’ positionalities (i.e. employee, rural, intelligentsia) is significant in shaping their experience. It is clear from the data that new international programs are an influence not only for the ideas of students internationally but also of those who are in local places. They too are already impacted by the programs in Tajikistan which have become a catalyst to go to international borders. Solim’s analysis on the young officials and the impact of Japanese program was illuminating:

Now those young government officials who apply and study here they are much focused and very conscious of their study and position. They know that they are here as government officials and they have to be good, therefore they work hard. It is not only impacting positively here but in Tajikistan also this JDS scholarship is contributing positively as young smart minds want to work in government institution with low salary because of continuing their education abroad (Solim, 2017).

The narratives reveal that the program is not only impacting the trajectories of those students who study but it also attracts talent into the government because the motivation for joining the civil service despite the low pay. Perhaps, this is likely to be a short-term affect as those who go on scholarships they do not return or, on their return, they find their jobs unsatisfactory as it will be seen (Section 7.4).

7.2 Learning Beyond the Educational Institutions

The findings demonstrate that experience is not only limited to university and educational surroundings but the whole society becomes the educational platform for students. The experience of Tajikistani students in Japan indicates significant change with respect to personal growth. The
change is dependent as the previous chapter has drawn attention to, on how culture (Japanese culture) (Section 6.3.3.3) can be one pull factor and demonstrates how experience in the new culture can influence students’ understanding of their learning and build confidence. Students were very clear and quite analytical about what mobility means for them; they understood that educational mobility is a life-changing process.

My experience was not only beneficial in terms of my ilmu donnish (knowledge and education) but it was something that influenced my raftor, kirdorvashinokhtiinsoniyat (attitude, relationship and understanding of humanity) (Zanjir, 2017).

The idea of experiencing ‘democracy and multiculturalism’ was another significant experience for students. Students see democracy and freedom in action as being reflected in how people treat each other equally not just a political rhetoric. It goes beyond the role of institutions, and support. It also represents for them: choice, freedom, and, although, they do not directly say it, perhaps even rights.

Here [in Japan] you have many opportunities to work, study, enjoy your life and learn many new things. I had heard about democracy, freedom, multiculturalism but I did not know the meaning of those words. My experience influenced me to understand what multiculturalism means as I experience it every day. I know what freedom is as I see how people treat me and how I feel confident about my actions. Democracy is such a big word that I heard it almost every single day [in Tajikistan] but I did not practice it at all (Hamid, 2016).

What is also clear from the discussions is that understanding theory alone does not change perceptions and attitudes. It requires an enabling environment which allows people to see and put concepts in practice such as idea of democracy and good governance even without being promoted, and naturally without huge declarations.
Multiculturalism is significant. During international education, this is the most obvious thing that you practice. You can meet with different people from different countries and cultures that is amazing but, in my university, back home, we all were from the same country, which does not have that impact on learning and understanding of multiculturalism (Khotun, 2016).

The findings show that students have grown in their ability to reflect on their environment rather than simply absorbing it. What is evident from some students’ testimonies is that now they are confident, and they predict a very positive future for themselves and they believe they can become who they want to be, as Odil’s testimony attests:

I dreamed of working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but deep down I thought that I cannot make it. After my international experience in Europe and now in Japan, I realized that I can become the person that I want to be (Odil, 2016).

The experience of international mobility and living in Japan clearly builds confidence. However, it is difficult to ascertain how much of that is due to the process of mobility and how much was impacted by being in Japan. As stated in Chapter 5 (Methodology), the students felt that the process of thinking about themselves was illuminative for them, as well as, being valuable for the researcher.

As for those who had previous international experience, they underline that each context impacts their understanding about their growth and confidence differently.

It was my dream to become a diplomat between Japan and Tajikistan […] now it changed, because I do not see the system is ready to accept people without connection. I was the only candidate at that time who knew both Tajik and Japanese language but I was not successful, I don’t know, I don’t know why […] (Toqat, 2016).
Toqat testimony is the reverse of Odil (2016) who is still confident of his skills, knowledge and ability to work in his home country. However, students find it difficult to contribute when they return because they find the system has not changed.

First it was very hard to know Japanese cultural values and system. Japanese people work honestly. Their honesty always touches my heart. They come on time and do things as it is required. They do not need boss they are self-motivated. We need to have these values. What impacted me a lot the transparency, honesty without bribe and corruption. If I go back I will never ever take money from anyone, (lough) […] I will not bring my relatives to work. This way we can grow (Rauf, 2016).

Initially, understanding the culture was not easy, it took six months a year to learn and understand the culture. Students found some of these cultural values to be transferrable. The transformation is also seen in comparison to their home countries’ issues. They find the gaps in their cultural values that have become acute after the collapse of the Soviet Union and civil war of Tajikistan.

One thing is very important to highlight. In Japan, something makes student learn. Maybe there is less corruption. Something makes student learn. There were students who read 500-600 pages per day. I questioned, why? I was wondering how [they can read this much]? What makes those students learn? I think fazō (a learning space or environment) makes student learn. Despite lessons, there were cultural activities. That program encourages students to learn about each other’s cultures. Those cultural shows give you some new energy and students can learn something new and go back to continue their studies. This thing is very significant. This one is missing here [in Tajikistan] in our universities. But you know, I think if they [government] provide people with the same quality of life and education and environment our people also do well in their education (Aidar, 2016).

The data shows that students are learning not only about education but hidden educational aspects which they may call “system” or ‘governance.’ This also perhaps points to different
pedagogies that allow students to engage in constructive learning. However, what is important is that right governance enables people to take responsibility of their life.

7.2.1 Multiple Mobility and Students Experiences Abroad

Those students who had had previous experience in Europe (or elsewhere internationally) came to Japan with higher expectations and so they struggled more compared to those students who did not have any previous international experience and hence, no preconceptions about what to expect. Some students believed that Japan has a very organized higher education system and the country might use both Japanese and English languages. However, once in Japan, most students find it very stressful, because of the language, food, and the bureaucracy which constitute a few key challenges. My own experience also confirms how it was difficult to begin life in the new context compared to the system of the U.K. As Khotun states:

I did not believe that it will be so difficult [before coming to Japan] I told my mom that do not worry, I was already in the U.S. and now it is easy for me to live in a new country. However, after coming I was shocked. Fortunately, one of my American friend helped me a lot to settle down (Khotun, 2016).

It is interesting to note that students had undergone - and survived with resilience-much more traumatic experiences during the civil war and after. Yet, change on this scale which included language, culture and a new environment seemed to be difficult at first although resilience carried them through.

However, for those students who had had their first international an experience in Japan and then went to the U.S. had similar feelings in reverse “first days I was shocked as I studied in Japan for two years and gained different experience. [In Japan] people are very humble and here you see opposite…” (Khonum, 2017).
I was in Europe and during my one-year experience, during classes I debated with classmates, friends and teachers. However, here sometimes I have a feeling that if I disagree with the *muallim* [meaning university professor], he/she will be disappointed with me (Odil, 2016).

They find there are differences in how respect is accorded to university professors in Europe and in Japan. In Japan, the professor is the authority and most of the time students do not question him/her. In Europe, professors do not act like an authoritative figure rather they act as facilitators who are open to any questions and critical feedback from their students about their classes. Certainly, the experience and analysis of those who were labor migrants in Moscow and then came to study in Japan is completely different again from that of the international students or even Tajik students in Moscow. One student who went to Moscow in order to earn some money to come to continue his education in Japan found that he did not gain confidence while being a labor migrant in Russia, but his experience taught him about culture, attitude, and the importance of education in his life.

I was beaten for nothing. I spent few days outside […] When I left outside, when I felt so miserable, I realized how education is important. I remembered what my parents taught me *bachambakhudatsohib shav* (my son shapes your own destiny). I promised myself, I should continue my studies not to be like *gado* (beggar) (Hamid, 2016).

Those who were students in Moscow before coming to Japan have emphasized the difference in pedagogy, the way the subjects are taught in Russia and in Japan. “We do not have a problem with theoretical understanding as we learn a lot about theory in Tajikistan as well as in Russian universities. In Tajikistan and Moscow, the main focus is on theories” (Khonum, 2017). Zoir (2017) also confirms the importance of educational experience in Japan compared to post-Soviet countries. Students emphasize the practicality of knowledge particularly in the field of technology, architecture, and Japanese language teaching.
I studied in Petersburg for one year… After coming to Japan, I realized that the former Soviet countries still focus on paper and pen but here everything is taught through exploration and practice. As I want to be a Software Developer, I need to practice it, not to write down theories (Zoir, 2017).

And Zoir further proudly announces that this type of education system enhances people’s creativity. The experience of students can differ according to the subjects they study, the place they live in, and the educational support they receive.

Here I believe I can invent something new after I finish my M.A. degree. I would like to develop new software… Here, the focus is more on practice but during my one-year experience in Petersburg we focused a lot on theory. We kept pen and notebook with us but here you can see visual aids and learn through practice (Zoir, 2017).

The impact is seen as being positive as students build confidence in being able to contribute to the knowledge society. They find their experience positive as they believe through the practical knowledge that they are gaining from university, they can be practical in terms of creating something new in their home country. Moreover, their opinions about their education show how the education system can nurture a creative mind and enable students to believe in themselves. The aim of their education does not remain technical only; they do not just receive a diploma as they do in their home country, but their educational experience changes their perceptions about their ability to be a part of a new technological generation who is an active creator of knowledge, not just a passive recipient of it. Those who have experienced this more open pedagogy wish to bring it back home because they recognize its value as this next testimony shows:

I want to bring change in education system in my home country, therefore I needed to educate myself first. I studied here (Japan) when I was in grade 11. I enjoyed learning although I did not know the language I found the attitude of teachers and their support
is stunning. What, I really like here is that students spent lots of time in the library learning something new and we can do the same in Tajikistan (Zebi, 2016).

She wants to engage with structural change so that other students might benefit without necessarily having to go abroad. For her, education system of Japan was the best model and she wants to take that back to Tajikistan. She was not only a passive learner but she was an observer in the context and educational institutions, which she believes she can take back. However, as we shall discuss in the next section, it was not always easy to acclimate to the very different culture of Japan and it needs a process.

The time that I learned Japanese language there was not a single Japanese book in our university. I asked my brother to send one from Moscow and I shared it with all students in my faculty (Sayob, 2016).

We spend four years at university but after we finish we cannot write one critical paper and I learned how to write thesis here (Odil, 2016).

Students critically analyze the situation in both contexts, Japan and Tajikistan. They have quite clear objectives about why they want to study abroad. Their comparative analysis of both contexts indicates that they are ready to take the challenges of education as far as they learn something new and they question the local context of not developing skills and knowledge today.

The testimonies of the research participants reveal the gap between their expectations and the reality they face. They expected to communicate with local students but, in reality, they cannot build that bridge because of the language barrier and their busy schedules with studies.

In Tajikistan older generation [some] are set in their ways and most have very narrow understanding of the world but the youth [some] are taking these opportunities [international education] and they are very open minded with other people and cultures but in Japan it is vice versa. In Japan, the older generation are very sociable they
immediately search ways to communicate with you, talk to you but the younger generation is different, more reserved (Kuibek, 2016).

Several students spoke of how they expected to have some Japanese friends but, in most cases, they do not see Japanese students in English speaking classes. In Japanese language classes, there are no Japanese students. The problem is not just about being physically together in the program but is also connected to the attitude of the people: the young and old generations’ attitudes towards foreigners, in general. It appears that to experience a culture is one thing but, in general, everyday interactions are harder to go beneath the surface to make strong friendships. Perhaps this is true of how people of all cultures deal with those outside of their own culture.

7.2.2 Gender Role and Educational Trajectories

The issue of gender is a very sensitive topic in the context. Interestingly, some participants spoke about their perceptions of gender roles and how that has changed. Prior to his education in Japan, for Hamid, a woman’s role was that of a housewife, the one who looked after her children. He comments that:

My experience taught me that women should be educated. My father is a teacher and he encouraged my sisters to continue their education and I myself was against this idea. My father told me that ’when you have your own daughters then do not educate them, now I will decide for your sisters.’ After my experience, observation and reflection here, I think it is important to educate women first in the family (Hamid, 2016).

Hamid’s (2016) opinion demonstrates several aspects which again are connected to different contexts. He connects his experience to his family and discussions around the sensitive topic of girls’ education. It is plausible that his father was the one who supported his daughters and his

123 Relative to Tajikistan, they find patriarchal society of Japan gives more scope to women.
brothers were the ones who contributed to gender discourse. The narrative reveals that views can be impacted from outside, by community (community of young boys, school community, neighborhood) not only family. Students’ ideas are shaped while engaging with different cultures.

7.3 Employment and Labor Market: Part-Time Experiences

Students take responsibility for their own lives when they are independent. What is interesting is that sometimes children constitute a dependency on their parents and parents also constitute a dependency on their children. Parents’ support effect children negatively in some situations as we see in the example of Rauf:

I did not work hard and did not understand the value of time and work; this is because my parents sent me money. I did not realize how hard it is to earn that amount of money. If my parents sent me money to Japan, I would not work and did not understand what life means. Here even I left with no money. I saw how people are busy with their life. Children try to work and save money. In Tajikistan, I did not understand the value of the money that my parents sent me. I came to Japan I saw how people work hard. I realized why some countries remain underdeveloped. I realized and I think this is because of people. People do not work hard. As I mentioned here people plan every minute and for them it is significant to know what to do and when to do (Rauf, 2016).

What Rauf realizes is that without his parents’ support in Japan, he learned to be independent and to plan his life something which was emphasized by other students as well (Sayob, 2016; Mullo, 2016; Khotun, 2016; Fez, 2017). Rauf’s experience abroad helped him to grow in more ways rather than in his academic discipline. Having experienced two different systems and life experiences, students realized that they had become more mature and reflective individuals. Their narratives suggest that they have started analyzing and questioning the challenges and success of life and life lessons. This too is an aspect of *kase shudan* and it is not just to be your own person but, perhaps to also be more reflective.
What I learned here is planning. This is crucial. I plan my every single day and even minute. I know what I will do at this moment next month. This is crucial but we do not develop this skill in Tajikistan. Here for me “Time is gold” […] (Mullo, 2016).

The majority of students also underscored the importance of planning and following through on things that make you successful. Even those who are now back in Tajikistan emphasize on planning and importance of following it through (Shodi, 2016; Rauf, 2016; Karim, 2016; Hamid, 2016; Khon, 2017). Despite their rich experience and becoming reflective learners after the completion of their programs, students feel challenged and confused in terms of their employment which the case of Kuibek speaks about:

I learned new knowledge and information [on Tourism] but it did not help me to find a good job [related to his subject]. Although, I visited many public and private institutions to find a job that is related to my education and diploma, I could not find any. … However, I have gained new knowledge and information, although I cannot use them in practice today (Kuibek, 2016).

I am now stressed and feel worried. When I go back I do not know what to do. Nobody cares what you have learnt (Rauf, 2016).

There is a lot of research that speaks to the fact that higher education influences employability but this research shows that in some contexts, higher education does not necessarily have a direct impact on employment in the home country due to lack of some local policies on international students. Firstly, the ‘limited labor market is limited’ in Tajikistan. Secondly, the utilization of personal connections in the labour market and the corruption that exists in the local context can influence employability, sometimes, in spite of their qualification. Before going back to Tajikistan, Kuibek was excited to return and to find new job position but it took him several months to find employment which was not even related to his educational qualifications which he
had gained in Japan. Often, in these developed countries, the connection and corruption are more subtle.

Connections, friendship, and trust play a great role in an individual’s employment and life as noted by some students (Sayob, 2016; Kuibek, 2016; Hasan, 2017; Rauf, 2017; Safar, 2017; Mohru, 2017). Connection and corruption, although, they cannot be condoned, partly arise from limited market and limited economic opportunities. I should be clear that experiences of employment can differ. Government officials, who come to study in Japan, already have a secure job to return to and those who come as Japanese language teachers also find jobs at the Japanese language faculties in the universities of Tajikistan. However, the majority of returnee’s face challenges in finding jobs as Kuibek’s testimony demonstrates. There are some students who work in NGOs and Japanese programs when they return and they see that the result of their achievement is due to their education and experience in Japan. Those who studied in Japan and now work in Japanese projects in Tajikistan see themselves as ambassadors of cultures.

It changed me, my life and changed my worldview. I become more confident with what I do. I know how to work with international people and how to communicate with other people. Now I work as a consultant. After coming here, [to Tajikistan] I was not satisfied with different jobs as I believed I can do better and I can be in a better position (Mohru, 2017).

Now I work in Japanese companies and I believe this is because of my educational experience in Japan. Otherwise, I did not know how to behave and how to work with them. Now I know the ethics of work and ethics of communicating with Japanese and people from different countries. I feel I am a bridge between Tajikistan and Japan (Suhrob, 2016).

It is also important to remember that all developed countries are not entirely free of corruption. Indeed, some students commented that this could happen even in Japan.
Even in Japan if you do not have connection it would be hard to find out a decent job. I did not know that but in my second year, I started searching for job. I talked to my friends and then I found that it is almost the same as our country (Informal discussion, 2017).

However, the majority of the young generation acknowledges meritocratic societies as fairer and allowing individual’s freedom and scope to use their knowledge and grow professionally than their home context.

7.3.1 Policies on Part-Time Work for Students

Although we have seen earlier connection can play a role as well and undermine that link. The findings in this thesis demonstrate that there is a strong connection between study and access to the labor market depending on the policies of the destination country. Students see part time job policies as a significant factor in their mobility as well. They find that through their part time jobs they also gain new friends, skills, and knowledge. Particularly those who learn the Japanese language find that a part time job allows them to put their knowledge in practice.

I work in mini stop. It is very small but with the highest technology that you can do all the transactions and payments there. My experience in that mini-shop helped me to learn how to communicate with people at the same time learned new skill of how to use those technology that is available in the shop. I am there to help people but usually I ask clients to help me (laugh) […] (Safar, 2017).

You know Japanese language is very difficult. There is different way of expressing and referring to people. There is formal way as well as polite way of talking to people. I learned those things while my part time experience. People are very nice even if I do not know some kanji characters they help me with that (Qaisar, 2017).

The majority of students now come to Japan with the purpose of learning and working simultaneously. As mentioned above, education is broader than their formal education.
7.4 Brain Gain and Brain Waste

The importance of mobility deepens and becomes critical when there is a lack of opportunity in the home context. For some, the idea of opportunity is not related to employment alone but to the issue of not growing professionally and personally. It is this that some find so frustrating that it makes them leave their home context a second time.

Why I am here [in Europe] now? This is because of my educational experience in Japan. After Japan, I realized that I cannot grow in Tajikistan. Although, I was employed and had a very good job position but I did not see any growth there. I was not challenged. If I stay in Tajikistan, I would lose whatever I learned in Japan. Even after Japan, I could not imagine that I can live there [in Tajikistan]. We have very limited professional growth. I found our professional growth is limited. I do not mean career growth I mean professional growth. You can become a chairperson, leader but it does not mean you grow professionally. Even I could reach the highest career ladder but I could not grow professionally (Khonum, 2017).

The students are not concerned just about the present time but are thinking of their future personal and professional growth. For example, although, in some countries people struggle to climb a particular career ladder, for Khonum, that was not a problem. Rather, the crucial issue for her centered on wasting her time, her knowledge, and her professionalism. Her experience equipped her with a rich educational and professional background and she did not see how she could make use of whatever she learned. Education, as we noted earlier, is broader than academic learning and, in this case, it is linked to the workplace. Just as students left Tajikistan to study abroad for lack of quality education at home, they may return to find the same challenge facing them in the employment field. They may have a good job but their skills and knowledge are under-utilized and they experience what I call ‘brain waste.’ The data suggests that the home context has remained almost static while the students have been exposed to a dynamic set of
experiences which has escalated their growth. They may now find it hard to re-orient themselves to realities they have outgrown.

The poor quality of education, particularly at university level, was stressed by almost 90 percent of students.

I learned and gained so much experience here. I lived here almost for 7-8 years. If I go back they do not value me. They do not except my knowledge and expertise as an expert (Nurullo, 2017).

Students gain much from their stay abroad beyond the disciplines they study and it is a concern that the home countries do not see the benefits of these wider and broader norms of sophisticated and well-educated people due to brain drain. Students see that the international environment enables them to update their knowledge, skills, and become experts in their field. Therefore, they find that their home context does not value their new skills and expertise although they see themselves as an expert equal to other foreign experts. It is also not only host countries which are contributing to brain drain, students are finding the same challenges in their home counties.

7.4.1 Mobility Opportunity and Desire to Stay Longer

Almost all students either explicitly or implicitly conveyed the idea that they had changed their minds about going back to their home countries. Although the reasons for wanting to stay longer differed from student to student, the younger students spoke of wanting to continue their education to get a Master of Arts and then a doctorate. Those who came earlier emphasized the value of gaining international experience.

I thought I would become a software developer in Tajikistan after my Bachelor degree. The job Software Developer is something new that is needed in Tajikistan. Now I
decided I have to continue my education. Here at school our professors also underline about importance of education and doing an M.A… An M.A. offers a better educational opportunity and better experience (Zoir, 2017).

As it is said shunidan kai buvadmonandididan (seeing is better than hearing). Our previous generation always highlighted above proverbs that seeing is better than anything else. Now I truly believe that if you see you get different experience (Anvor, 2017).

Those who were the pioneer students in Japan also found that after their studies, they said they preferred to gain some international experience in Japan for one to two years. However, some stayed longer. One could question wanting international experience was used as a cover for delaying the return. The influence of international education on professional lives trajectories is to be evident in gaining confidence (getting ready for interview in national and international arenas) that reveals the link between mobility and professional lives (King et al., 2010). However, some of them stayed longer and have been living in Japan for more than eight to ten years.

I studied in Osaka and then moved to Tokyo this is because I could find better job here (Jalil, 2016).

First, I studied in Kyoto then because of interest on different field I moved to another city and now I work in different place (Safar, 2016).

My findings also concur with Altbach and Teichler (2001) in terms of educational mobility can create mobility opportunities for students in home and host countries. Students find that their educational mobility is becoming a “launch pad for an international career” (King et al., 2010, p.18) and it could turn to new ways of labor migration. The students’ educational and professional experience created new mobility within Japan.
7.5 Summary

This chapter highlighted the importance of the international experience of students and has shown that this experience is not only limited to the professional space but that there are personal benefits that are also gained from their international experience. The testimonies demonstrate that learning is not confined only to university space, subjects, and language, but also experiences connected to the larger society. The sections above demonstrated that experience of students is connected to their position in the society and the different factors in local and international arena. It is also significant to underline that they see how their trajectories have changed comparing it with their previous experiences in different geographical borders. The next chapter discusses the implications of these findings, linking them to the conceptual framework and exploring their implications for the students, the research and the researcher.
CHAPTER VIII - DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

This chapter links the conceptual framework (Chapter 3) and the empirical data (Chapters 6; 7) and seeks to explain the significance of the findings. The theoretical concepts of mobility, translocality and life trajectories are brought to bear on the findings. This chapter will argue that in the context of Tajikistan specifically, these concepts collectively create a bridge between the macro and the micro aspects of student mobility and make visible the nuances of mobility, personal growth, changing perspectives and positionalities that are all a part of the experiences of student educational mobility. I posit that within localities there are micro-local spaces (personal progress, ideas, values) that are shaped by micro and macro-levels. Several key themes emerge from the empirical data: educational mobility motivators; students’ perception of the value of education; and the symbolic meanings they attach to education and to the importance of effort or action.

8.2 Educational Mobility Motivators: Process or Event?

This research and other scholarly studies suggest that political transformations led to forced and involuntary migration after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In countries such as Tajikistan people searched for security and a better life through labor and later education mobility. There is debate that the designated reasons for mobility during post-Soviet, post conflict conditions (1992-2000) are no longer applicable today; however, my research findings reveal that the connections still exist. One of the explanations of student mobility may be that the forced migration, built resiliency but was preceded by a traumatic stage.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and Tajik independence through a traumatic civil war disrupted self-biographies in Tajikistan. The resultant impact was transformative for the whole
country through a significant time period. These transformative experiences (Eastmond, 2007) evoke new meanings and shed light on the student transformations; both crises (the post-Soviet, post-conflict situation) and standstill aspect in time (no progress, not something new). The independence inked citizens to continuities and discontinuities. Continuities in terms of having to survive and build lives based on what they had and knew. Discontinuity related to people’s life styles, indeed their very realities, dreams and life trajectories were subject to so much disruption and involuntary movement.

What is striking in the post-Soviet, post-conflict Tajikistan is that in the face of momentous changes in every aspect of their lives, communities continued to uphold the value of education? Indeed, the findings show that it gained even greater value after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent civil war. In the immediate aftermath of the civil war for some families, education was viewed not just as a value but inspired hope as articulated by Kuibek “for us education was the only hope during those dark moments [referring to civil war].”

The findings of the study interviews suggest that sometimes circumstances pushed individuals to make decisions relating to educational mobility (for instance the internal displacement caused by the civil war) and sometimes these decisions (to stay or to move, which region to move to and so on) changed their life circumstances. Tumultuous circumstances can act as a catalyst to the process of mobility: in the case of war people are led by circumstances rather than being able to act on their own terms and initiatives. The findings affirmed that, after independence and civil war, the need for educational mobility arose from structural factors such as the decline in the quality of universal education at primary and secondary level in Tajikistan (Chapter 4).

124 Those who have moved to Afghanistan faced many challenges as their children could not continue their education compared to those who moved to Russia or Kazakhstan.
Amidst the discontinuities and disruption of life during the civil war and internal displacement (involuntary mobility), the Tajiks also had to deal not just with shattered dreams with respect to education and careers, but with a shattered system. Yet, some years later as the findings attest, some elements of the education system were restored (Chapter 4, Context) together with the establishment of private schools offering good quality education. These improvements made it possible for the participants in this study to make that final move at tertiary level to places like Japan, a country whose relationship with Tajikistan was impossible under the former Soviet system. Macro structural factors thus both created the need for educational mobility under duress in the first instance and also made mobility for education possible in a wider global arena in the years after independence.

My study data suggest that mobility does not end either with Japan or with finishing tertiary education but leads to migration mobility and further studies. My findings further reveal the complex embeddedness of agency and structure notwithstanding the fact that during the civil war, agency was severely curtailed. The data reveal that international educational mobility is an element of the students’ “self-help” strategy (Castels et al., 2014) for those wanting to change their own and their families’ lives. In the sociocultural context of Tajikistan, the international student is seen as a progressive person (peshrafta) and an intellectual (bosavod/badonish).

My findings show that before international mobility, students are purposefully engaged in local/regional mobility for their education. Either the entire family moves or the child is sent to stay with relatives in places with better schools. Hence local/regional educational mobility pre-figures international mobility. Moreover, this is a process that is occurring earlier and earlier in the life of the child as the testimonies revealed. Where in the past, educational mobility was a feature of tertiary education, my findings demonstrate that students may move repeatedly from school to school in order to enhance the quality of their pre-tertiary education. It is clear therefore
that these motivations for international mobility are already embedded in local mobility motivations. Educational mobility is a (continuous) process *over* time, not an event *in* time.

### 8.2.1 Local Mobility Complexities

The findings of this research reveal and speak to the complexity of local mobility; local mobility seems to be more complex than international mobility. People who know each other (in some cases, those who have the same national identity) are more likely to experience negative stereotyping and physical barriers, especially those from villages or those perceived to be from lower social status. To quote Kuibek,

> it was very tough, people labeled each other according to their regions or …they stopped and took our money (Kuibek, 2016).

I was a labor migrant for two years in Moscow. I found it so hard. I could not believe there was so much hatred in the world. I was beaten for nothing… Here nobody asks me “Where you from?” (Hamid, July 2016).

Students chose local and international mobility with the aim of “avoiding the negative identity of being ‘stagnant,’ or a ‘bystander’ who is making no progress in life” (Olwing & Valentin, 2015, p. 253). Educational mobility proposed a new identity: that of being an ‘educated person’. Moreover, those who wished to study abroad were considered as being interested in widening their horizons and ready to confront new challenges in educational advancement.

### 8.2.2 Mobility Recast

Mobility is part of a wider mobility culture that links a person to their outlook on their entire life-course (Brooks & Everett, 2008). An intrinsic part of educational mobility is how people “produce meanings” while living or encountering a new phenomenon and responding to
change and transition. As previous studies have noted, students’ mobility, motivation and trajectories are complex and interlinked with policies on international relations, economic aspects and social issues (Luthra et al, 2014; Kou & Bailey, 2014; de Haas, 2008; Samers, 2010; Koser, 2007). These linkages create new forms of relationships at the macro, meso and micro level (Chapters 2 & 3).

As elaborated in the previous sections, mobility is not only social and cultural but it is personal-intrinsic in the form of individual growth. When students complete their studies, how they position themselves is also part of the effect of mobility and at the same time translocality. Their decision to return home or not is affected by conditions and opportunities in their home country that in turn create the impetus for mobility within the host country in search of a new job or can lead to greater mobility if they choose to return to their home country.

An interesting question worth exploring but outside the scope of this research is whether, after some years in Japan, would the students-turned-migrants continue to have the same or as strong a connection with their local spaces or whether this would either diminish or change? Student mobility is both about education and post education in that the initial mobility space at the tertiary level can also create or open up further mobility spaces.

The ‘growth’ or kase shudan on aspect of mobility and life trajectories suggests the notion of brain waste (see Section 8.5.1) that emerged from the data as indicated by the internal process of mobility. The empirical data revealed that the metric of brain waste is expressed both in economic terms and as talent, skills and knowledge that could be wasted. Further, the data also suggest linguistic significance in how the concept of “harakat” (movement) is embedded in the language of progress, “to move” (forward) to act.

125 “Az tu harakat az Khudovan barakat” meaning (you move and Allah will grant you abundance). Moving is defined in a sense of growing.
8.3. Personal Desire to Shape One’s Destiny

A consistent theme that emerged from the findings is the notion of Kase Shudan or kase shudan/ba khud sohib shudan, which means “the shaper of one’s own destiny.” The findings demonstrate that the concept of kase shudan is dynamic and changes according to the time and context. Kase shudan has always been a traditional value. “Kase” is a pronoun in Tajik/Persian, meaning anyone or anybody. In that sense it is a neutral term, but if the person lies or does anything negative, he/she is called “no-kas” “a nobody” meaning, ‘not behaving like a human being’. It has nuanced understandings within the social configurations of Tajik society and reflects socio-economic status: if the family members are professionals the emphases would be on professional achievements of their children and if the family is poor, the emphases would be more on economic achievement. In some parts of Tajikistan, the role of status is emphasized in the family, and the terms used for “kase shudan” is “odami kalon shudan” for somebody of importance in a high position.

During the Soviet period, social status was a value that was not so prominent because everybody had an “equal” life. Kase shudan referred to skill and education. The skillful person can better his or her life through her knowledge. What was interesting is that the notion of kase shudan was more pronounced in rural areas compared to urban areas. However, in current times it is mostly used in relation to economic fulfilment: ‘If you have money, you have everything’. In independent Tajikistan, for example, those who go to Moscow, earn a living and change their own life circumstances are considered to become ‘somebody’. Hence, position and recognition are added to the idea of economic independence with respect to kase shudan.

The participants of the research seemed to suggest an additional meaning linked to decision-making in their own lives and the role of the individual in their family and in society. Decision making is not only personal but it is viewed in the larger context of society. As Mullo states, “Now I am so humbled and inspired. I want to be “obrumand” (proud) and support global
community, not only Tajikistan but to give back to Japan whatever I have learned and gained here.”

The data also shows that the choices that children make are ones that parents cannot assist with and so, while they broadly understand and support their children’s decisions to continue their education, support is often sought from peers and other local mentors. What is important here is education pushes students to be independent. Education is about growth and it is seen to achieve that. The process leads to formation of social networks through relations built with peer support and local mentors in both countries Tajikistan and Japan. The narratives demonstrate that the life history of participants has complicated connections to the context and community in which the person lives.

What emerges from the analysis of the findings is the connection between the notion of kase shudan and student life trajectories. Life trajectories theory shows that student’s trajectory is also impacted by cultural values, emphasized in the family and recognized through the importance of kase shudan in their lives and in how they negotiate their situation in Japan. Those who had more challenging life situations coming from rural areas emphasized kase shudan while those who came from urban families with higher economic status did not stress its significance.

As was discussed above, the collapse of the Soviet Union was transformational for almost all students at many levels. The student interviews revealed an increased degree of self-realization in the process of migration as they stepped out from family, school and geographical dependency towards new localities and culture. They recognized that self-realization is a dynamic process that evolves over time depending on the age of student. Students identified it as a strengthening of a personal, internal set of values, honoring independence of thought and action, resilience, growth and self-development, implying agency and accountability to oneself.
Viewed at a deeper level, it is the belief and knowledge about the importance of education as the source of “freedom and change” which allows cultural notions to evolve. The values and practices are produced and reproduced in the local and global contexts.

8.4 Broader Connections of Translocality: Continuity or Loss

Students mobility is not only about students going across international borders but it is broader than that. It is about international relations of countries, in this case Tajikistan and Japan (Iloliev, 2016).126

Scholars define translocality as being related to spatial connection (home and host) but I would contend that it is about students living in their international spaces and also being connected to their communities back home. Their translocality represents a certain value to the students. The data shows that this continuous connection works both ways. Firstly, students bring with them certain values from their localities at home to the host country and because the students are not only connected to their home countries but connected to the global arena, they translate those values into action through sharing ideas, knowledge, values, governance and other skills as well as financial remittances. Translocality is about negotiation of places and subjectivities of agents (Brickell & Datta, 2011). It is the theory of translocality that allowed the researcher to look at connections afresh.

Secondly, my findings demonstrate that the concept of translocality goes further and it changes its function as students from the global arena bring that information, values, and skills from their global/host context back to their home context. It can be argued that international students do not necessarily need to go back home in order to do this.

126 Muhammadsho Iloliev Personal interview August 13, 2016, Former president of Academy of Science in Tajikistan.
8.4.1 Creating Awareness Space: From Global to Local

International students enrich their local or home contexts with their experiences of living abroad. They create an “awareness space” (Gonzales, 2011) that consists of helping local students navigate the requirements of the international education system, acting as role model in their local communities and sharing specific skills such as (proposal development and other such technical skills). The findings show that such awareness spaces are restricted to small groups.

International structures, local programs, private schools and international students as role models become important mobility contributors for students back in the home context. The findings show that the awareness space remains limited to small groups who have networks or have material capital, but the rural areas remain excluded from this space. Due to lack of opportunities, information is not shared among the larger community. Close network structures ensure that information sharing is limited; information does not reach beyond specific small scales. Structural barriers such as the lack of access to internet or institutional structures (such as career offices at schools and universities) means that the information is not universally available. The concept of an awareness zone explains the contextual phenomenon of ‘limited circulation’ of information.

Students who studied abroad are now more conscious of the values of transparency, meritocracy and equity in practice and they see the impact of these values in action in their host countries. International students’ experience brings into sharper relief the lack of these practices in their home countries and perhaps contributes to their decisions not to return. It should be noted however, that instances of nepotism or misapplication of democracy are not completely absent in Japan; but are limited and not endemic.
8.4.2 Remittances and Translocality: Role of Siblings

It should be pointed out that an important change in the translocal mobility is an economic one in the form of remittances\(^\text{127}\) that international students send to their families back home. The findings highlight that the majority of younger international students contributed to their families in terms of financial contribution, remittances and also taking care of their siblings, encouraging and guiding them in their educational journeys (Mullo, 2016; Sayob, 2016; Kuibek, 2016; Toqat, 2017).

The impact of their higher education is recognized by the students as helping them to become more self-reliant and trying to take charge of their own lives. In turn, they now wish to change their family standing as well. *Kase shudan* is also associated with notion of helping family (siblings), in most cases extended family and friends to become educationally mobile to achieve a better standard of education.

In many families, decisions are now made by younger members even in the case of education. In the case of Tajik students in Japan, the data attests to the fact that they continue transmitting the value of education to their younger siblings and supporting their families through sending remittances and guiding them throughout their education and providing moral support. As Conradson and McKay (2007, p.170) sum up, “mobility provides various material opportunities but at the same time is accompanied by complex dynamics of obligation, longing and connection.” The notion of support and care remains very strong amongst students. The data suggests that it is children who change the status of their parents and family through taking and following new life patterns, for example by acquiring international education and through labor migration. The findings point to a change in the translocal connection that international students have with their home contexts.

\(^{127}\) In most families the young members, particularly male members choose labor migration in order to support their younger siblings to continue their education.
8.4.3 The Role of Agency

The notion of agency is inextricably linked with the idea of kase shduan (Section 8.3). The notion of agency contributes to the motivation of students as well as their personal and professional change. Students become main actors and exercise agency in the process of educational mobility. In the process their efforts are used to improve educational prospects. In that sense agency is closely linked to the notion of kase shduan and its current meaning for the students in terms of independence and thought.

I was not successful for three years but then I communicated with my friends in Tajikistan and those who are in Japan. They helped me with my proposal and supported me throughout the application process (Zafar, 2017).

Even though I inform my parents about my application and scholarship, they do not understand what I mean. Therefore, when I was successful then I told them as I did not want them to worry for me during the process (Sayob, 2016).

The data shows that in the new context, experiences strengthen individuals to become more responsible for their own lives, their education and their future roles. The individuals grow as they have to negotiate, think, learn and make decisions in the specific moment without recourse to family wisdom or consultation. There is nobody for them to turn to for help in making decisions. Those who already move from one region to another locally they also build some of these skills in the new context and they make decisions based on their family condition, experience and culture. The notion of translocality emphasizes the role of agency. As already mentioned the decision making is also and additional meaning that student testimonies bring to the idea of kase shduan. This is not only about confidence; it is independence.

The concept of translocality helps us to understand the two phenomenon which are juxtaposed together: the communal and cultural, and the individual and personal, as the translocal
concept emphasizes the embeddedness of both global and local spaces and its practical aspects (Schröder & Stephan-Emmrich, 2014; Brickell & Datta, 2011; Fay, 2011; Conradson & McKay, 2007). This study found that mobility is not only geographical but it is cultural. The mobility of students redefined the geographical mobility, it is translocal and locality contributes to who you want to become.

### 8.4.4 Agency Exercised by Women

The findings reveal the changing role of women in the education journey. Although research studies suggest that there are different motivations for men and women in the search of education and in the field of migration (Curran & Saguy, 2001), my findings show that there are differences in the actual motivators such as connection to family and a renegotiation of gender roles. As already noted, Tajikistan is a gendered society (Chapter 4) but as my findings suggest, the gendered norms are undergoing change. My data shows that mothers are becoming the agents of change, crossing the traditional boundaries and pushing their daughters to continue their education domestically and internationally.

Although gendered norms in Tajikistan created educational barriers for women, from the translocal and mobility lenses, the findings point to the dynamism of culture and the space for agency that women are now exercising within it. It is the socio-political situation that enables the process of reproduction, contestation and transformation (Kleist, 2017) as discussed below. Almost all males except one stressed the role of their father who advised them to continue their education; in contrast, the majority of female students stressed the role of their mothers in supporting them to continue their education.

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128 Similar to some contexts in countries of Asia (Huong & Cong, 2018)
129 His father migrated when he was a child and passed away in the host country. Therefore, the role of his mother was high in educating and supporting him to continue his education.
130 However, 8 students also emphasized that parents did not stress the role of either father or mother.
Although, we cannot conclusively say that mothers support only daughters, it is noteworthy that mothers have taken on the role of encouraging and supporting their daughters. The data revealed the role of mothers as assertive individuals who push the boundaries of gender biases by challenging and asserting that girls share the domain of higher education with boys.

The polarities of male and female roles are always significant in the process of education and educational mobility, which is part of “wider life course mobility” (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002, p.5). In the Soviet period there ostensibly was gender equity despite the proverbial glass ceiling for women in some domains. However, cultural norms continued to prevail in this patriarchal society. The idea here is to understand that, “the mobility of men will be misunderstood if not seen in relation to the [im] mobility of women” (Bjeren, 1997, p.222). My data speak to the role of mothers as agents in decision making when it is needed, who can contribute to knowledge formation.

Women are also sometimes subject to involuntary mobility rooted in a culture where the wife has to follow the husband but as evidenced (see findings, where one such mother pushed her daughters), women do exercise agency. As the findings attest, mothers who were not educated are also pushing their daughters to continue education (Farishta, 2016). In the Soviet period there ostensibly was gender equity despite the proverbial glass ceiling for women in some domains. However, cultural norms continued to prevail in this patriarchal society.

8.5 Students Educational Trajectories: Diverse Trajectories

The notion of translocality is altered by a) students’ intrinsic personal mobility (as exemplified in the notion of kase shudan) and b) students’ newly acquired knowledge, skills and values in the host country. It is clear from this discussion that translocality is itself a dynamic and changing concept: as students move they bring their local values with them but also gain new
ones. This new reality, as the next section will explore, gives them new perspectives with which to look at their home countries.

Life trajectories illuminate the changes in translocality as well as student mobility, and student’s growth (*kase shudan*, reflexivity). It makes visible new emergent plans such as whether to return or not return, and what to give back and how.

The findings on student educational trajectories focused only on the student educational trajectories not on their whole lives. The educational life trajectories gave rise to the question of what made educational mobility possible for certain students. Student educational life trajectories suggested that their mobility choices have to be understood in the context of other background factors such as gender, internal mobility, education background, marital status, language ability, previous international experience, professional experience, life experience, and years they had spent in Japan.

The findings revealed that having graduated, students often decided to become “student-turned-migrants” (Robertson, 2010). In part, the findings showed that this is the result of structural factors such as the absence of coherent policies (recognition or otherwise of foreign degrees, enabling environments of work where their skills can be applied) in the home countries. The issue of students-turned-migrants continues to contribute to the brain drain from developing countries. Japan’s role as the pull factor with “student-switch[ing]” policies (Roberson, 2010) becomes stronger, turns to change whole life of educational mobile student as quality of education and contextual barriers is still live in their country. The data indicated the importance of pull factor in the host country and push factors that continue to operate in the country of origin such as quality of life that remain unchanged and hinder the graduates’ return. It is the use of the concept of life trajectories as lens through which to explore mobility that made visible students development and growth in their host countries.

131 Castles et al., (2014) also mention the lack of coherent policies impact labor migrants negatively.
8.5.1 Brain Waste

One of the reasons cited by the participants for not wanting to return relates to ‘brain waste’. Although economic considerations are important, other factors that are articulated as brain waste feature in the decision not to return. Poor quality education leading to poor quality employment are major considerations for returning students who feel that the knowledge and skills they have gained will not be utilized fully. The idea of brain waste is not new. However, it is usually accompanied by the brain drain phenomenon applicable to entire countries who lose their bright and skilled young people.

For this thesis, the idea was introduced and discussed by students as a personal one. This study posits that brain waste, whereby students find that their jobs underutilize their talents, is even more acute in the home countries compared to the host countries. Students explained it this way: that they came to Japan to study and intended to go back home initially but the experience of studying and living in Japan has made them change their minds. This happens for a number of reasons, one of which is the notion of brain waste (Khotun, 2017; Sayob, 2016; Hamid, 2016; Mullo, 2016).

My educational background that I have gained there [in Japan] does not match with our context as we do not have these kinds of requirements [such as public policy, tourism, architect] in our context, yet (Kuibek, 2016).

To some degree there is a struggle between loyalty to country and the locale on the one hand and what is seen as a more productive life in the host country, on the other. The context that pushes them out seems to keep them out. They are staying out because the opportunities to apply their experience are limited and wasted. The students have far outgrown their macro home

132 Students, personal interview with the author.
context. But there are exceptions with some expressing a wish to go back and contribute to their home country (Farishta, 2016; Zebi, 2016).

A concern about “brain waste” that also changes the perspective of students goes beyond the immediate. For some students going home is wasting their educational experiences and prospects for future family, “If I go back what will I do there? What my children do there?” (Sayob, 2016). Students’ personal and culturally endorsed life milestones such as marital status and having children also plays a role in a student’s perspective about their future lives as they contemplate better educational opportunities for their children.

In particular students from rural areas find their homeland, village (deha) a barrier to their return as it limits their personal and professional opportunities. This study finds that motives of moving and staying in Japan cannot be explained by push-pull factors only but in the wider concept of the life trajectories of students that makes them move and make their decisions.

However, students who live in towns and cities also feel the effect of brain waste as reported by Khonum (2016) “it is easy to reach highest job position but the experience does not challenge you and one cannot grow.”

The findings attest to the fact that international education increases the possibility of a brain gain for individual students and the student network connections. Brain waste in the home context is another pull factor for staying in the host country which offers the prospect of new opportunities. Personal mobility (from undergraduate to graduate) opens up new possibilities in the host country. This study finds that motives and staying in Japan cannot be explained by immediate push-pull factors only. The notions of kase shudan and brain waste—both which link education prospects, future goals and educational mobility (Kupfer, 2015), become motivators factors that influence educational life trajectory of students.

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133 Sayob, personal interview with the author, June 2016.
8.5.2 Opportunities and New Possibilities: Students Switchers

A significant part of the empirical data and my own observation in both contexts indicate that for students, the journey to Japan and the new possibilities offered there opens up unexpected new opportunities, including financial ones.

I thought I get my diploma (meaning finish my bachelor degree) and go back to my homeland. However, during four-year experience I decided to continue my education and also, I think better to find job here (Jalil, 2016).

Before I even did not imagine working here. When the company hired me, I thought I will stay here for 2-3 years and this year is 10 years for me in Japan (Doro, 2017).

As noted in Chapter 4 Section 4.1.1 Tajikistan is heavily dependent on the ‘remittance economy’ from labor migration. Those who work in government sectors do not earn a good enough salary to improve their life. Their experiences and perspectives about their future show that mobility is a “wider life course” strategy (Clare et al., 2015, p. 685) as was shown in chapter 6 in the case of young diplomats who take lower paid jobs in government to get the chance to come to Japan to study. At the same time, the new policies of Japan on part time job opportunities for students also support the future life goals of students. The host countries are benefiting from mobility of young minds. The successful policies on international education in Australia focused on recruiting more students as talented migrants and this strategy has now been adopted in Japan.

What emerges from change processes is a journey that transports students across distances and new places in order to make changes in their life, their family life and their country. Life trajectories are embedded in the context. The study demonstrates that there is a strong link between educational mobility and geographic destination in the domestic area as the lack of opportunities in local geographical spaces can impede mobility of people, not mobility motivations. Mobility of people is not linear: the translocal lens views it as “multidirectional and
overlapping networks [structures] that facilitate the circulation of people” that is “structured by the actions of the people involved and at the same time provides a structure for these very actions” (Grainer & Sakdapolrak, 2013, p. 375). An additional feature of mobility is that it allows for an ‘escape’: from the political situation, the low quality of education and poor quality of life, but also from the uncertainty of the future.

8.6. Self-Reflexivity

The interviews and analysis revealed that biographical narratives are not only about participants’ life stories but a logical structure and strategy that participants use to describe who they are in connection and relation to the past, present and their future actions and dreams. The biographical narrative approach allowed them to engage in self-reflexivity. The research findings authenticate the view that mobility is non-linear across different geographies and is linked to different stories, histories and motives. However, students kept reflecting that they had not thought about how some cultural values had guided them in their journeys. It was only when they did so that they recognized the importance of kase shudan in their lives and how they negotiate their situation in Japan.

8.7 Concluding Remarks

I began this journey by asking two questions: “What motivates Tajikistani students to study in Japan and how were their experiences shaped and informed in the new context?” I wanted to explore how students make choices and decisions about their education locally and internationally. I also wanted to know what international education means for them and how it can affect their lives. Although the educational and migration field is very broad and one cannot

134 There are “multiple selves” and connected to “various aspects to self” (Strauss, 1987, p. 207).
arrive at definitive answers, the research on the students’ domestic and international mobility has yielded some insights to the questions I raised.

In focusing on post-Soviet, post-conflict Tajikistan and its recently established relations with Japan, the study underscores the importance of understanding the context and cultural values, in order to understand student mobility motivators and student experiences.

The research also demonstrates the importance of linking conceptual frameworks when exploring an under-researched phenomenon: this enquiry found that the established frameworks on their own do not suffice to capture the complexity of what was being studied. The relevance of the conceptual framework for this study lay in the juxtaposition of the concepts of mobility, translocality and educational life trajectories, which, together, yielded fresh, new insights into student mobility experiences. This study helped us to reach a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of what is, in fact, a complex phenomenon. The additional new elements to familiar concepts and the location of the students at the nexus of the three overlapping concepts helped to make visible aspects of mobility which might otherwise have remained unexplored.

One of the significant findings of this thesis was the importance to students of the concept of “kase shudan” or being the shaper of one’s own destiny. They re-interpreted this notion to include not just having economic wherewithal or acquiring status but being independent in decision-making and exercising agency. The study also showed how women have begun to challenge gendered roles by encouraging their daughters to continue their education. When put together, the context and macro/micro level considerations are linked. They influence the kinds of motivation, contribute to the push-pull factors and guide the students’ decisions about their return from their home countries to host country.

The study also found that part of mobility is intrinsic; the personal desire to become the shaper of one’s own destiny (kase shudan) becomes one important motivating factor. The
‘mobility’ of students is as much about growth, as being a role model to others and being the shaper of one’s own destiny.

In choosing Tajikistani students as the focus of this study, the research makes a small contribution to an under-researched area (Tajikistan) and within it, an under-researched group of students (those seeking to continue their tertiary education abroad). The juxtaposition of translocality, mobility and life trajectories to form a rich conceptual framework which could capture and shed light on the complexity of the subject may be seen as a small contribution of this study as well.

As all research does, this study also raises additional questions suggesting areas for further enquiry. One such area would be to examine in more depth than the scope of this thesis allowed, how, and to what extent women are re-casting gender roles. A second area might be whether and how, if former students remain in their host countries, their connections with their home countries might be altered. What would translocality look like for them? And yet another area might be one of policy. If brain drain, brain gain and brain waste are such major issues in the use of or loss of talent, then what policy reforms could both home and host countries initiate separately or in agreement, to mitigate these effects of student mobility? There could of course be many other areas of research: these are identified here as being the ones that I feel are most pertinent.

8.7.1 What This Study Has Meant for Me

The students’ stories that I gathered and referenced here reminded me of my own life in my home context. They created me space to position myself as an insider as well as to keep distance as a researcher. Sometimes it was difficult to be the objective researcher because of the memories of the past. However, this journey opened up new doors to me and I feel I have grown not just academically but personally. It is not only educational institutions that impact thinking but
beyond that, communicating with new culture and people in Japan. I would like to end with the quote that reflects the researcher’s research process:

We may also speak of a reflexive objectivity in the sense of being reflexive about one’s contributions as a researcher to the production of knowledge. Objectivity in qualitative inquiry here means striving for objectivity about subjectivity…. Striving for sensitivity about one’s prejudices, one’s subjectivity, involves a reflexive objectivity (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2007 p.242).

I hope, as a researcher, that I have been able to maintain an ‘objective reflexivity’ while continuing to be empathetic to the participants who so willingly helped me on my journey towards becoming a fledgling scholar.
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APPENDICES

Appendix I. Research Questions

Exploring Educational Mobility of Tajikistani Students to Japan

• What motivates Tajikistani students to pursue higher education in Japanese universities?
• How have students' experiences, while studying and living in Japan, affected their trajectories in life?

Detailed Questions:

1. Tell me about yourself, your childhood, your parents and your siblings
   • What do you remember about your education at school?
   • What do you remember about your education at school?
   • What was the quality of education like when you become a university student in your home country?

2. Why did you choose Japan or Japanese universities?
   • Why did you apply to study in Japan?
   • What was your course of study; language, MA or PhD? Which field?
   • What are the benefits of studying in Japanese universities or within Japanese society?
   • Who played a role in your decision to choose to go to Japan? Why?
   • Who supported you to come to Japan (morally and financially).
   • Would you still want to come to Japan if you had a better opportunity and choice among other universities in different countries?
• What were your career plans when you were at university in your home country?

3. What was your initial plan when you applied to that particular Japanese university?
   • What affected your plans (reflect on your personal statement when you applied, what did you intend to do that time)?
   • What were the most significant moments that changed your ideas towards continuing your education?
   • When you reflect on your life, what were the most important change/s that happened to you?
   • How did the changes prepare you or impact who you are today?

4. Do you have any additional thoughts or comments that were not asked or discussed above?

Thank you for your time and sharing your valuable life experience!!!

Note: these questions were not necessarily asked from students as most of them by sharing their biographical narratives they touched all aspects and sometimes probing questions were used to clarify their raised points and purpose of sharing it.
Appendix II. Consent Form

Research Title: ________________________________

Researcher Name: ____________________________
Address: ________________________________

Affiliation: Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences. International and Advanced Japanese Studies, University of Tsukuba.

Date Range: June 1st to December 30th, 2017

Dear Research Participant,

You are cordially invited to participate in a research interview conducted by Nazira Sodatsayrova, Ph.D. student, at the University of Tsukuba. I am currently undertaking my PhD degree in the International and Advanced Japanese Studies, Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Tsukuba, Japan. As part of this degree, I am conducting research on “________________________________________________.”

You are being asked to take part in this research study to share how your educational mobility impacts your personal and professional experience during your experience in Japan. I am asking you to take part in this research because of your citizenship as a Tajik citizen who have studied in Japan and I believe your experience and knowledge can contribute much to the understanding of Tajik students’ experiences abroad, in particular, to Japan.

If you agree to take part in this research, I will conduct an interview/share questions with you. The interview lasts approximately 60 to 90 minutes, depending on the conversation. The interview will include questions about your personal and professional experience in Japan and it will look at how your experience in the new context impacted your personal and professional experience. With your permission, I would also like to record the interview.

Please read this form and feel free to ask any questions you may have before taking part in this research study.
For ethical reasons, I assure you that your name will be kept completely confidential. Your anonymity will be respected, and your name will be anonymized during the interview, when analyzing the data from the interview, and making any references to your comments in my PhD dissertation. The recording will be kept private and after transcribing the information, the recorded interview will be deleted immediately.

You might find some questions sensitive about your everyday experience in the new context. In the opinion of this research, there are not any risks anticipated for you participating in this research. Your participation is volunteer based and you can decide whether to participate or not. You have the right to ask questions.

You will receive the copy of this consent.

If you have read and agree with the above information, and you think that your ideas could be used for my research in the future, please kindly sign below or you can agree verbally without signing the consent form.

I consent to take part in this research:
Full Name: ____________________________________________
Signature: ______________________________
Date: __________________________

If you have any further queries, requests or suggestions you can contact me via email, skype or mobile phone:
Email: nazirasodatsayrova@gmail.com
Skype ID: _______________________
Mobile phone: _______________________

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Appendix III. Diverse Groups of Students

The Tajik students in Japan, whose studies are facilitated by the Japanese government which is supported by ODA, comprise the young employees from the government department ministers in Tajikistan. They are required to go back to their government jobs in Tajikistan upon completion of their studies. There are students who obtained MEXT scholarships offered by the government of Japan and the Japanese programs operating in Tajikistan as well as students who are self-financed. The table below illustrates how the mobility process escalated among the population in the context of Tajikistan through different recruitment policies by the Japanese government. The table also adds some more details on the program and diverse groups of students in Japan.

Different Groups of Tajikistani Students in Japan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholarships</th>
<th>Definition and Targeted Groups</th>
<th>Students from Tajikistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>JASSO</strong></td>
<td>Norway Student Service Organization:</td>
<td>Exchange students from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Administrative Institution</strong></td>
<td><strong>1. Student Exchange Support Program</strong> (Scholarship for Short-term study in Japan)</td>
<td>Japanese Language faculty and Slavonic University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Short term language courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEXT</strong></td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan</td>
<td>Research Students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Non-degree student: Japanese Intensive course and Research students

2. Degree-seeking students who enroll directly: MA/PhD

3. Undergraduate students- Global Scientist and Engineer programs (data is taken from MEXT guidelines)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JDS</th>
<th>Japanese Grant Aid for Human Resource Development- under Grant Aid of Official Development Assistance (ODA).</th>
<th>Young Government Officials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development bank</td>
<td>Young Employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Financed</td>
<td>Professional Training College (Senmongakkou)</td>
<td>Students from Japanese language Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language learners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scholarships given by Ministry of Education of Tajikistan

Source: Data is taken from JASSO guidelines (2017), JDS (2014), (MEXT, 2016) and research findings.

The above table displays programs/scholarships offered to those students and countries that have diplomatic relations with Japan. The role of nation state and diplomatic relations is significant in expanding as well as limiting knowledge boundaries. Tajik students benefit from diplomatic relations of Tajikistan and Japan.

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### Appendix IV. List of Foreign Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bosavod or Badonish</strong></td>
<td>Smart, intellectual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kase Shudan</strong></td>
<td>To become somebody, to become the shaper of one’s own destiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peshrahta</strong></td>
<td>Being progressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tajikistani</strong></td>
<td>People from Tajikistan, it is not to differentiate among the many different ethnic subgroups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Halal</strong></td>
<td>Permitted or lawful food and action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Khudorahmati</strong></td>
<td>May peace be upon him/her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poki/tozaghi</strong></td>
<td>Purity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fakhr</strong></td>
<td>Pride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Obru/etibor</strong></td>
<td>Dignity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sharmandagi</strong></td>
<td>Shame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ma’daniyat</strong></td>
<td>Civilization, development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bacham</strong></td>
<td>My son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ustod</strong></td>
<td>Teacher, professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Muallim</strong></td>
<td>Teacher or university professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Padar</strong></td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Niyati tehsil dar khorij</strong></td>
<td>Plan for studying abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Raftoru kirdor</strong></td>
<td>Attitude, behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shinokhti insoniyat</strong></td>
<td>Understanding of humanity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gado</strong></td>
<td>Beggar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fazo</strong></td>
<td>Learning space, learning environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shunidan kai buvad monandi didan</strong></td>
<td>Seeing is better than hearing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>