



How migrants made their way:
The role of pioneering migrants and solidarity
networks of the Wakhi of Gojal
(Northern Pakistan) in shaping the dynamics
of rural-urban migration

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. The current state of migration from Hussaini and Passu.....	2
3. Pioneering migrants to the cities and networks of support and solidarity.....	9
3.1. Pushing the door open: the first <i>Gojali</i> in military service.....	11
3.2. The long way to Karachi: the onset of labour migration from Gojal to Pakistan’s biggest city.....	15
3.3. From workers to students: how Karachi became the hot-spot for higher education for the <i>Gojali</i> Wakhi.....	22
4. Conclusion.....	30
References.....	32
Information on the competence network Crossroads Asia.....	34

1. Introduction

The rural high-mountain region Gojal in the Karakorum of Gilgit-Baltistan in Northern Pakistan is characterized by very high rates of rural-urban migration. Large proportions of the population have moved and are absent from their home villages in search of opportunities for education, employment, business, better facilities and improved living standards in urban centres. Generally, Gilgit-Baltistan shows higher rates of labour migration than the average in rural Pakistan.¹ In Gojal, the out-migration rates are even higher. For example, in the villages of Hussaini and Passu of lower Gojal, the share of the male workforce living outside Gilgit-Baltistan was 30% and 41% respectively in 2012. Over the last decade, a strong trend of further increase of out-migration rates has been observed for Gilgit-Baltistan (WORLD BANK 2011:20), which also holds true for the Gojal Region. Rural-to-urban migration within and from Gilgit-Baltistan is seen as an answer to the scarcity of local resources, opportunities and facilities in the villages and home areas. An increasingly insufficient agricultural base to sustain the growing population, lack of off-farm employment and business opportunities particularly for highly-qualified persons, lack of adequate health facilities, lack of educational institutions at the higher levels and providing a high quality standard of education, and the prevalence of higher income levels in the cities are some of the motivating factors for out-migration from rural areas of Gilgit-Baltistan (WORLD BANK 2011:20).

The current high rates of out-migration and mobility are a relatively young phenomenon in the region and are the outcome of a far-reaching process of mobility change and mobility expansion. Particularly in the former Hunza State (of which Gojal was part), outward mobility was highly restricted until the 1940s (FELMY 2006:373; KREUTZMANN 1989:162, 1996:289; SÖKEFELD 1997:87). Only after the establishment of Pakistan in 1947 and the dwindling grip of the *mir* (the local feudal ruler) of Hunza on controlling mobility, people became free to leave the territory of Hunza. Since then the numbers of migrants to the cities have steadily increased from this area (KREUTZMANN 1989:180-194; 1993:30-36; 2012:65-68). Migration from Gojal follows highly selective patterns, with migrants generally choosing among a few destinations.

Many empirical case studies all over the world have described such spatially highly selective migration patterns, where increasing numbers of migrants from a particular sending region tend to keep migrating over long periods of times to the same few target destinations (MASSEY et al. 1998). The selectivity of migration patterns often has been explained by using the theoretical conceptions of social networks, chain migration, cumulative causation and emergent migration corridors (BOMMES 2010; CASTLES 2010; FAIST 1998, 2000; MACDONALD and MACDONALD 1974; MASSEY 1990; PRIES 2001; THIEME 2006, ZOOMERS and VAN WESTEN 2011). From a migration network perspective, migration is seen as a collective process, in which individual migration decisions are highly influenced by social ties and contacts to other migrants and facilitated by support from within social networks based on “social ties” (i.e., long-term interpersonal ties, such as kinship relations, friendship or neighbourhood) and “symbolic ties” (based on shared identities, symbols, memories and meanings) (FAIST 1998:218). Particular importance for the explanation of migration phenomena as socially embedded processes has been attributed to the social units of the household, kinship networks and the sending community along with their solidarity systems (FAIST 1998:218-220; PRIES 2001:35).

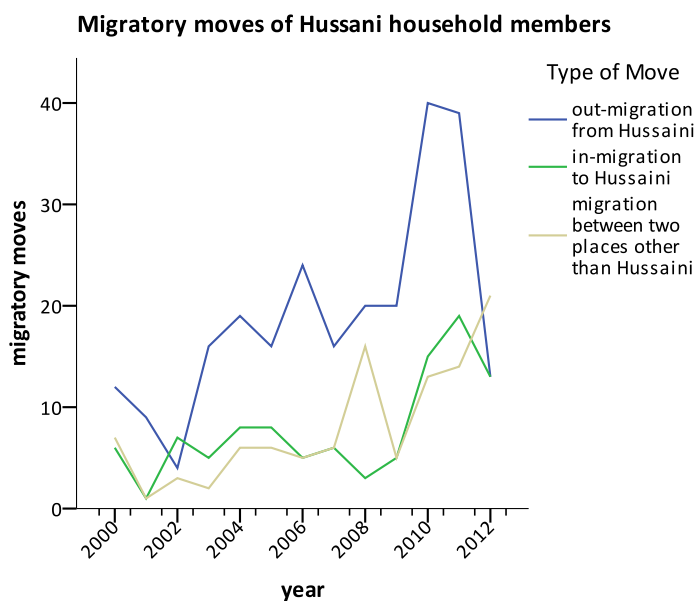
¹ In 2001, about 24 percent of the male workforce (aged 18 years and above) had migrated outside of Gilgit-Baltistan, while the respective figure for rural Pakistan was only 15 percent (WORLD BANK 2011:20).

In this working paper, I investigate the role which solidarity networks based on different types of shared identities, perceived relatedness and kinship affiliations played for enabling, shaping, facilitating and intensifying migration processes from Gojal since the 1940s, using the example of the high mountain communities of Hussaini and Passu in lower Gojal. With the help of selected cases from these villages, I will try to show how support based on different forms of solidarity enabled new forms of migration and increasing numbers of migrants. Particular focus will be placed on the role of pioneering migrants in the early decades of out-migration from Gojal to the cities (1940s to 1970s), which mark a period of far-reaching mobility changes and decisive events for the creation of the current state of a highly mobile, translocal *Gojali* community. These processes eventually have led to the currently prevailing diversified migration patterns. Their characteristics and recent dynamics will be outlined in the first part of this paper.

The results presented here are based on three months of fieldwork in Pakistan in autumn 2011 and 2012. A multi-local fieldwork approach was chosen (MARCUS 1995), in which communities in the sending region Gojal (Gulmit, Hussaini, Passu), as well as selected migration targets (Central Hunza, the regional centre Gilgit and the national capital Islamabad) have been visited. In these places, oral history and narrative interviews have been conducted with current and former migrants from Gojal, as well as with village elders and local experts in Gulmit, Hussaini and Passu. Particularly the narratives of 48 former military, labour and student migrants, some of them being among the earliest migrants of their villages, have helped to shed light on the early phase of migration from Gojal to Karachi. In addition, a comprehensive village census has been conducted each for the villages of Hussaini and Passu in October 2012, revealing – among other data – the migratory biographies of all household members of these villages and their close kin.

2. The current state of migration from Hussaini and Passu

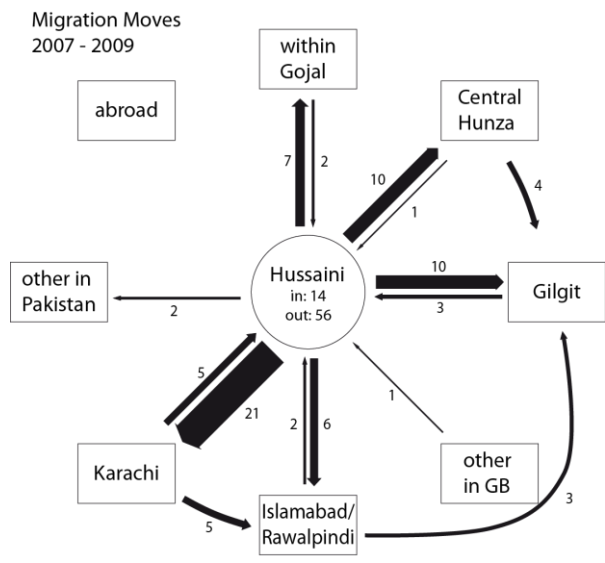
Hussaini and Passu are among the major settlements of the lower Gojal Region in the Hunza-Nagar District of Gilgit-Baltistan, Northern Pakistan. The villages are located on the right bank of the Hunza River and form glacier-fed irrigated settlement oases, in which field cropping is combined with horticulture, orchards and animal husbandry with seasonal use of high pastures. The population of both villages, 84 households in Hussaini and 101 households in Passu, is homogeneously composed of *Ismaili* Muslims belonging to the ethno-linguistic group of the Wakhi and speaking the Wakhi language, an eastern Iranian vernacular. Both villages are directly adjacent to the Karakoram Highway (KKH), connecting them to the Pakistani-Chinese border to the north and to Central Hunza, Gilgit and the Pakistani lowlands to the south. Since a massive rockslide just south of Gojal in January 2010, the KKH, the important lifeline of the region, is blocked by debris and an artificial lake that formed behind the barrier (KREUTZMANN 2010; SÖKEFELD 2012). Since then, travel between Gojal and the rest of Pakistan requires crossing the lake by boat, a weather-dependent, seasonal, dangerous and expensive passage; this has severely affected commuting, transport and travels from and to the region. Livelihoods are hit hard by the consequences of this situation, which negatively affects the major sectors of local income generation: cash-crop production, tourism and cross-border trade. While local incomes have gone down, commodity prices in local markets have been rising. In the aftermath of the disaster the migration levels even experienced a strong increase. For example in Hussaini, the cases of out-migration from the village jumped from a pre-disaster level of about 20 cases per year to 40 cases in 2010 and 39 cases in 2011 (Figure 1). Similarly, the number of returning migrants nearly tripled after the Attabad rockslide.



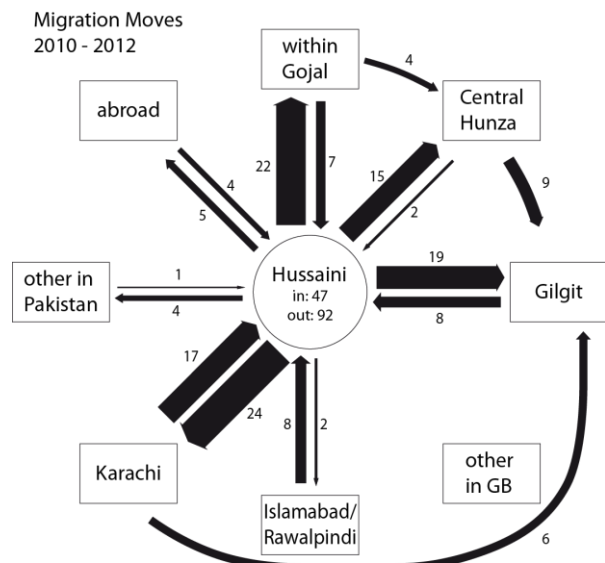
Data: Survey Benz 2012; Design: Benz 2013

Figure 1: Development of migration from and to Hussaini, January 2000 to October 2012

Migration of members of Hussaini households between third places (e.g., migration from Central Hunza to Gilgit) remained at a high level after the disaster. A comparison between the migration pattern in the years before and after the Attabad disaster (Figure 2 and Figure 3) offers a deeper understanding of these shifts. Out-migration from Hussaini since 2010 particularly increased to nearby destinations such as Gulmit in Gojal, Aliabad in Central Hunza and to Gilgit, which except for Gulmit means the continuation of a trend already observable in the years before. The large majority (85%) of the out-migrants to these places were students seeking higher education and quality education in the private schools and colleges at their migration target. Only the rise of migrants to Gulmit can be seen as a direct outcome of the Attabad disaster. Before the blockage of the KKH, many students used to commute on a daily basis between Hussaini and Gulmit. After the disaster and the rupture of the road link, they were forced to become education migrants staying with relatives or in a hostel in Gulmit. Return migration to Hussaini increased after 2010 from Gilgit, Islamabad/Rawalpindi and particularly from Karachi. Most of these return migrants came back to the village after completing their education, after the termination of a temporary job, or after health treatment. Some of them became migrants again after their return and left Hussaini for education or jobs elsewhere. A direct link between the impacts of the Attabad disaster and increased return migration could not be established from the data.



Migration between third places with less than three migratory moves is not indicated. Data: Survey Benz 2012. Design: Benz 2013



Migration between third places with less than three migratory moves is not indicated. Data: Survey Benz 2012. Design: Benz 2013

Figure 2: Migration of Hussaini household members, 2007-09 (i.e., before the Attabad disaster)

Figure 3: Migration of Hussaini household members, 2010-12 (i.e., after the Attabad disaster)

At the time of fieldwork in October 2012, large proportions of the village population² of Hussaini and Passu were involved in migration strategies, resulting in a large number of absent household members. In Hussaini, 26.1% of the village population (30.4% of males and 21.8% of females) were absent from the village and residing in a range of different places. Of the 601 inhabitants of Hussaini, only 444 actually lived in the village. The phenomenon of absenteeism is even more pronounced in Passu, where 34.5% of the village population (40.3% of males and 27.8% of females) were absent. Of the 687 inhabitants of Passu, only 450 were residing in the village. It is particularly the young and economically active population who was absent, with a share of 63.0% absentees in the age group of 15 to 24 years for Hussaini and a share of 77.4% absentees for Passu respectively (Figure 4 and Figure 5).

² The village population here is defined as all people who are part of a Hussaini-based household plus all people who reside in the village. I consider a person to be absent if s/he has been living for at least three months outside the village. A household here is defined as consisting of the head of household, his or her marriage partner, all people living in their family home, all unmarried children of the household head and all married sons and married brothers of the household head with their wives and children, who live or whose wives live in the household head's family home.

Most of the migrants from Hussaini and Passu have moved to the same few selected destinations only, showing a highly focused but also village – and gender-specific pattern of migration (Table 1 and Table 2). Male migrants mostly have gone to Karachi (17% for Hussaini and 26% for Passu), to Gilgit (29% for Hussaini and 22% for Passu) and to Islamabad/Rawalpindi (16% for Hussaini and 23% for Passu). In relative terms, Karachi and Islamabad/Rawalpindi have higher importance for migrants from Passu than from Hussaini. This is also reflected in quite differing migration patterns among females of both villages. While migrated women from Passu have mostly chosen between Central Hunza (24%), Gilgit (20%), Islamabad/Rawalpindi (19%) and Karachi (19%), women from Hussaini have strongly preferred nearby destinations within Gojal (29%), Central Hunza (25%) and Gilgit (35%), but demonstrate a strong disinclination for all ‘down-country’ destinations. These selective current patterns reveal unequal structures of connectedness of the two village communities to the particular migration targets, which have to be interpreted as the outcome of differences in the trajectories of mobility change and migration between these two villages.

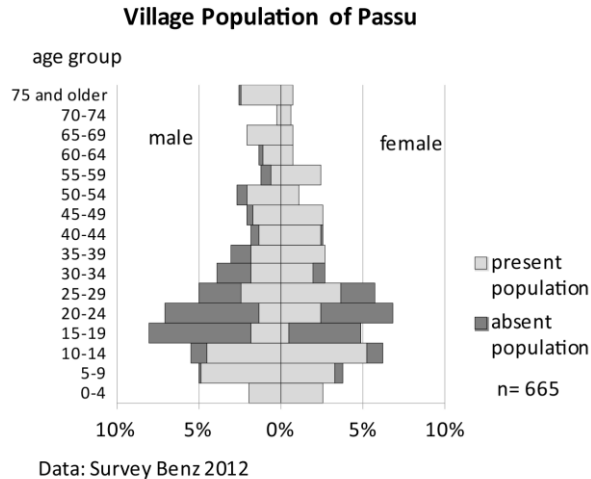
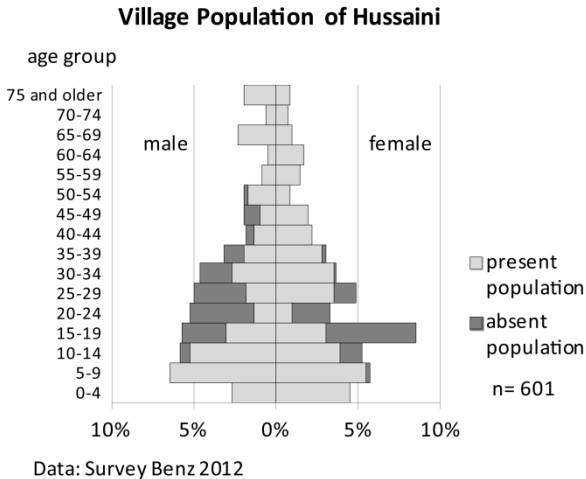


Figure 4: Village population of Hussaini, 2012

Figure 5: Village population in Passu, 2012

The age structure of the population in Hussaini and Passu shows a pronounced gap of small children aged five years and below. This is a result of the out-migration of many young couples, who prefer to raise their children in an urban context providing better education and health facilities. Actually, rather than having out-migrated as whole households, most of these young families began as bachelors who left their village and decided not to return after marriage.

Table 1: Place of residence for individuals from **Hussaini**, October 2012

	male		female		total	
	individuals	percent	individuals	percent	individuals	percent
Hussaini	211	69.6%	233	78.2%	444	73.9%
other places within Gojal	8	2.6%	19	6.4%	27	4.5%
Central Hunza	4	1.3%	16	5.4%	20	3.3%
Gilgit	27	8.9%	23	7.7%	50	8.3%
other places within Gilgit-Baltistan	1	0.3%	1	0.3%	2	0.3%
Islamabad/Rawalpindi	15	5.0%	0	0.0%	15	2.5%
Lahore	1	0.3%	0	0.0%	1	0.2%
Karachi	16	5.3%	3	1.0%	19	3.2%
other places in Pakistan	11	3.6%	2	0.7%	13	2.2%
states of the Arabic-Persian Gulf	5	1.7%	0	0.0%	5	0.8%
other foreign countries	4	1.3%	1	0.3%	5	0.8%
total	303	100%	298	100%	601	100%

Data: Survey Benz 2012

Table 2: Place of residence for individuals from **Passu**, October 2012

	male		female		total	
	individuals	percent	individuals	percent	individuals	percent
Passu	219	59.7%	231	72.2%	450	65.5%
other places within Gojal	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Central Hunza	5	1.4%	21	6.6%	26	3.8%
Gilgit	33	9.0%	18	5.6%	51	7.4%
other places within Gilgit-Baltistan	12	3.3%	8	2.5%	20	2.9%
Islamabad/Rawalpindi	34	9.3%	17	5.3%	51	7.4%
Lahore	9	2.5%	1	0.3%	10	1.5%
Karachi	38	10.4%	17	5.3%	55	8.0%
other places in Pakistan	9	2.5%	1	0.3%	10	1.5%
states of the Arabic-Persian Gulf	4	1.1%	0	0.0%	4	0.6%
other foreign countries	4	1.1%	6	1.9%	10	1.5%
total	367	100%	320	100%	687	100%

Data: Survey Benz 2012

In total, 45 such moves of households outside of the village could be traced from Passu and 21 from Hussaini over the last three decades. These households mostly moved to Karachi (16 from Passu and 8 from Hussaini) and Gilgit (9 from Passu and 6 from Hussaini). 12 households from Passu moved to the twin-city Islamabad/Rawalpindi, while only one household from Hussaini moved there. Some households have moved abroad. From Passu, two households have moved to the USA, one to Canada, one to Australia and one to Tokyo in Japan. One household from Hussaini has moved to New York, USA.

In the context of the patrilocal family system prevailing in Gojal, women move after marriage to the place of their in-law's household. In the villages of Hussaini and Passu most of the women marry outside of their home village. Only about 10-15% of all sisters of the current household heads have married into households in their father's village (15% for Hussaini, 10% for Passu), while around three-fourths of them (77% for Hussaini, 75% for Passu) have resettled in the context of marriage migration in other villages of Gojal. The remaining part has migrated outside Gojal.

Among male household heads and their brothers, about 16% have permanently out-migrated from Hussaini and 29% from Passu. Most of these out-migrants have resettled in Karachi (44% of out-migrants from Hussaini and 35% from Passu), Islamabad/Rawalpindi (6% for Hussaini and 28% for Passu) and Gilgit (17% for Hussaini and 19% for Passu).

In the context of mobility-related strategies of risk mitigation by sectoral and spatial diversification of the household's income sources and activities, households have increasingly turned into multi-local structures, with their members spread across two or more different places. By this, the limited local resource base and scarce opportunities for local income generation could be complemented and partly substituted by tapping and utilizing external resources and opportunities in different sectors and at different places. The outcome of these diversification strategies are complex, multi-local social configurations of households and families, with intense flows of money, goods, people and support between various spatial anchor points.

A bi-local set-up, i.e., having a member in at least one place outside the village, currently characterizes 76% of the households of Hussaini and 79% of Passu. A multi-local setting, with household members spread across three or more different places, feature 42% of the households in Hussaini and 50% of households in Passu.

The feature of having one member living in Gilgit is exhibited by 38% of the households of Hussaini. 30% of the households in Passu have a member in Gilgit. Of Hussaini, 39% of the households and of Passu 61% of the households have a member in one of the lowland cities, and 11% of households in Hussaini and 13% of Passu have a member abroad.

The biographies of many of those household members who currently live in the village bear migration episodes, which indicate former periods of multi-locality of their households. For example, in Hussaini, 62% of the men and 20 % of the women currently living in the village have formerly been migrants outside of Gojal and Hunza. Nearly every second man currently residing in Hussaini (51%) and Passu (48%) has spent a part of his life in Karachi.

With more and more households developing ties outside the region, seasonal migration from Hussaini and Passu to the cities, mostly during the harsh winter months, has gained momentum. Especially old people move to be with their out-migrated sons to Gilgit, Islamabad/Rawalpindi or Karachi and stay with them for a few months before they return to the village in spring. Also, some young women, accompanied by their small children, seasonally move to their husbands, who are working in the cities.

The absent male household members from Hussaini and Passu constitute about half of the male workforce (aged 18 to 60 years) (48% in Hussaini and 54% in Passu). This not only has implications for combined mountain agriculture in the form of labour shortage, redistribution of individual work-

loads on the shoulders of the remaining women and elderly, as well as the decline or abandonment of certain practices, but also is indicative of unequal rates of return between local agricultural activities and external, off-farm occupations. The absent men are mostly either engaged in remunerated activities or in education, or in a combination of both. 52% of male migrants from Hussaini and 68% from Passu are enrolled as students at the place of destination. While formerly a combination of part-time work and a program of studies was the dominant pattern among student migrants, currently only a minority of 4% of male student migrants from Hussaini and 10% from Passu are such 'student-workers'. A share of 47% of male migrants from Hussaini and 31% from Passu are engaged in remunerated activities only.

Most of the female migrants are engaged in education: a vast majority of 89% of female absentees from Hussaini and 85% from Passu have migrated for the sake of education and are enrolled as students in schools, colleges and universities. Only about 10% of female migrants are engaged in remunerated activities. There are no female student migrants from Hussaini and Passu who work part-time in addition to their studies; all female student migrants are fully financed by their families and/or scholarships.

The preferred destination of migrant students varies with their level of study and also depends on gender-specific considerations. For male student migrants at the higher levels of education, in former years (and still among poorer families) destinations with comparatively low costs of living and the opportunity to find part-time employment have been preferred. This had led to the increased importance of Karachi as a destination for education migration until the late 1990s. Currently, students in higher education increasingly select those places of study which offer the best institutions and facilities for their studies, and the range of study destination has diversified. This has become possible thanks to the growing availability of financial support from within family networks, based on decent incomes of former generations of migrant students, who often found employment in good positions after their graduation. For female students, preference is given to places that can provide a 'safe' and secure environment for the young and often unmarried women, e.g. secured by the presence of a local *Ismaili* community and 'trustworthy' student hostel facilities. This has led to a high importance of Central Hunza as a destination for female student migration from Hussaini and Passu. Currently, 13 female students from Hussaini and 19 from Passu study in Central Hunza, compared to only two male students from Hussaini and four from Passu.

Generally, education plays an important role in the geographic proximity of destinations. The lower the current level of education of the migrant is, the closer s/he will prefer to stay. From Hussaini, for example, many students at the middle and high school level attend school in the neighbouring village of Gulmit. Starting from the high school and inter-college level, Gilgit becomes more important as destination for male migrant students, while females at these levels of study tend to seek admission in closer-by Central Hunza. More distant places such as Islamabad or Karachi play a major role for student migrants from Hussaini and Passu only at graduation levels.

Those who study outside of Gojal and Hunza mainly opt for Gilgit, Karachi and, in the case of Passu, also for Islamabad. Other destinations within Pakistan, such as Lahore or Peshawar, only play a minor role, and only from Passu there are six students studying abroad at the Bachelor and Master level.

3. Pioneering migrants to the cities and networks of support and solidarity

The Gojal Region today presents itself as a region characterized by high levels of mobility and migration. People come and leave the region on occasions of village festivities and life-cycle ceremonies, for summer vacations or to escape the harsh winter, for visits, for doing errands, for employment and business, for education and for health treatment. But this current state of intense and permanent flows of transport, travellers, commuters and exchange in and out of Hunza and Gojal has not always been the case. It is a still quite recent phenomenon and the outcome of a process of mobility expansion over roughly the last seven decades. Prior to that, travels had not only been severely hampered by lacking or insufficient transport infrastructure, but also by political restrictions on mobility.

Before the 1950s, Hunza was connected to the garrison town and regional centre Gilgit only by narrow and difficult mule tracks. The journey between Passu in Gojal and Gilgit took about four to five days on foot; after the completion of the Karakorum Highway in 1978, the same trip lasted only a few hours by vehicle. In the 1930s, the main road connection from Gilgit to the lowlands of British-India ran across the Babusar Pass (4,173 m) and through the Kaghan Valley. It was not more than a dirt track, open for traffic only for a few months during summer season. The first jeep reached Gilgit in 1949 through this route (FISCHER 1998:520; KREUTZMANN 2004:198). In 1957 a track fit for motorized traffic was extended towards Hunza (KREUTZMANN 1995:221). With the construction of the KKH, which reached Passu in 1964, Gojal was made accessible for motorized traffic (KREUTZMANN 2012:67). Since its completion in 1978, the 1,150 km asphalt road connects the Pakistani capital of Islamabad with Kashgar in China via the Khunjerab Pass (4,550 m), running along the Indus and Hunza valleys. The KKH quickly turned into the lifeline of the Gilgit-Baltistan Region in general, and Hunza and Gojal in particular, as it allowed for the provision of necessary food and commodity supplies from the Pakistani lowlands (KREUTZMANN 1995:220). These improvements in transport infrastructure also eased the physical burden of travelling and gave way to increasing mobility along its main connections. The establishment of a weather-dependent flight connection between Gilgit and Rawalpindi as early as 1927 and highly subsidized ticket prices after Pakistan's independence further facilitated travels from and to the region (KREUTZMANN 1989:37; 2004:198).

Besides the physical difficulties of travels due to poor infrastructure and challenging terrain, the mobility of the people in Hunza and Gojal was severely restricted until the 1940s by rules and regulations under the local feudal sovereign, the *mir* of Hunza. Gojal was incorporated in the realm of power of the rulers of Hunza during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and settlements with Wakhi immigrants from the Wakhan Valley were established to consolidate this territorial expansion (KREUTZMANN 1989:18-19, 46-47). The new immigrants were highly taxed in kind and were subject to compulsory labour in the feudal Hunza state. Gojal became a kind of internal colony and soon served as the grain chamber of the Hunza mountain fiefdom. In the 1920s, the *Gojali* constituted only one-fifth of Hunza's population, but had to contribute four-fifths of taxes in the form of grain, animals and other agricultural produce (KREUTZMANN 1996:284). Spatial mobility was highly restricted in the Hunza state and scrutinized by the *mir's* representatives in the villages and at certain checkpoints. Leaving Hunza's territory required special permission, issued by the *mir* and charged with high fees. The permission was controlled at the border check-posts at all paths leading in and out of Hunza. This permission system allowed members of the thin feudal elite as well as a few traders, post-runners, herders and craftsmen to cross the state boundaries for business, but meant a complete prevention

of outward mobility for the overwhelming majority of the common population. With this, the people in Hunza and Gojal were also cut off from the growing labour opportunities in Gilgit, where thousands of workers from Kashmir, Baltistan, Darel, Tangir and Kohistan found seasonal employment in agriculture and in the construction of roads, bridges and telegraph lines (STÖBER 2001:190-191). The former immigrants from Wakhan were trapped in a state of spatial fixation within the boundaries of Hunza. Individual cases of flight from a pressing tax burden, forced labour and severe poverty have been reported for this era. It was only in the 1940s, under the rule of *mir* Ghazan Khan (1938-45) and his successor *mir* Muhammad Jamal Khan (1938-45), that the travel restrictions gradually were eased, and the tax burden, which was further intensified during the 1930s, was lowered again. Mobility controls on the people of Gojal fully ceased to be in effect by the mid-1960s.

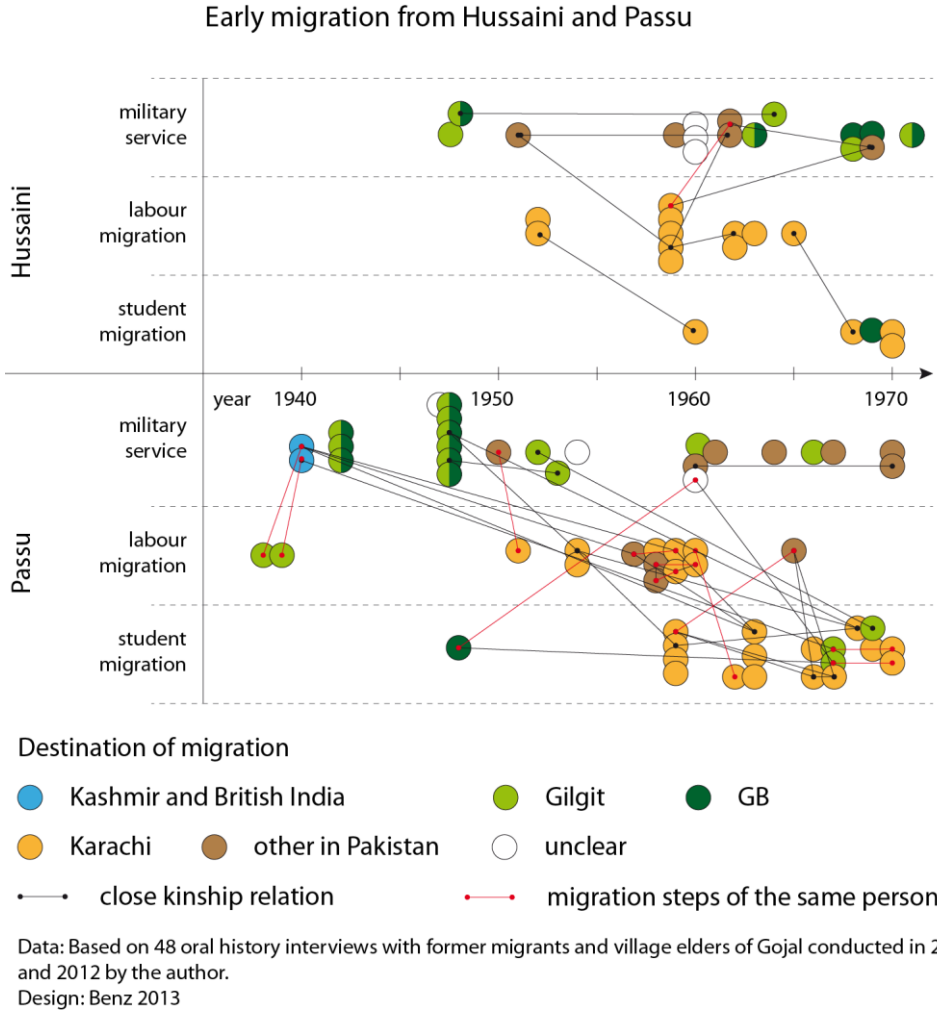


Figure 6: Succession of three types of early migration from Hussaini and Passu in the 1940s to 1960s

Improved travel conditions and the ceasing mobility restrictions provided the stage for the people of Gojal to identify and pursue new, non-agricultural and non-local livelihood opportunities, which also promised to provide a way out of the then severe state of poverty. From oral history interviews and biographical interviews with early migrants and village elders, the history of early out-migration from

the villages of Hussaini and Passu could be reconstructed (Figure 6). Between the 1940s and the 1960s, one can see three different types of outward-directed (male) migration emerge from Gojal to the cities: migration in the context of military service, unskilled labour migration and educational migration. The onset of each of these phases was initiated by early pioneering migrants, who dared to take advantage of a new option, i.e. migration to a distant city with a particular intention (army service, labour, education), without having personal contacts there and without having the option to resort to the experiences of any predecessors in this venture. The central question, therefore, is, how did these early migrants manage to make their way to the cities? Where and how did they find inspiration, encouragement, support and facilitation? What role did different kinds of support networks play for these early migrants, and based on which social and symbolic ties, shared identities and perceived affiliations could they get access to and benefit from these? This shall be examined for the three initial migration types in some detail in the following, based on oral history and narrative biographical interviews with some of these earliest migrants. From their narratives and examples it will show that social networks, and particularly kinship networks, play a crucial role in enabling and facilitating migration, and provided the basis for the progression from one stage or type of migration to the next.

3.1. Pushing the door open: the first *Gojali* in military service

One of the first opportunities for non-local off-farm occupation and income generation which showed up for the *Gojali* in the 1940s, was service in the military forces. The British, who had conquered the Hunza state in 1891 and had established a system of indirect rule under a newly-installed loyal *mir*, had set up a local military regiment in the *Gilgit Agency* in 1889, the *Gilgit Levies*, which in 1913 had been reorganized as the *Gilgit Scouts* (DANI 1991:311; TRENCH 1986). Local enlistment provided income opportunities for young men from the region, including for 150 mercenaries from Hunza since 1913, but the *mir* of Hunza banned Wakhi from military service at least until 1935 (KREUTZMANN 1989:185; 1996:288). The recruitment of the first Wakhi from Gojal into the *Gilgit Scouts* and also into the British colonial army in the late 1930s marks the turning point and forms the nucleus of a far-reaching mobility change and spatial mobilization of the Wakhi unfolding over the subsequent decades. The early mercenaries from Gojal were not only the first commoners to earn regular cash income, they also experienced urban life, learned about job and income opportunities in the cities and saw large numbers of children attending schools.

Drawing on oral history accounts and biographical narratives of village elders in the villages of Hussaini, Passu and Gulmit allows shedding light on the experiences of those earliest *Gojali* in military service, the circumstances of their recruitment and the subsequent effects on their families and communities. The respondents reported that the earliest men from Gojal, who had served in the military, had left their villages in the late 1930s and early 1940s to serve in the *Gilgit Scouts*, but also to join the forces of the *maharaja* of Jammu and Kashmir, Hari Sing (1935-1949), and the British Indian Army.

Particularly during times of war and crisis, the increased need of the armed forces for new soldiers offered additional opportunities for men from Gojal to join the military service. During World War II, when the British Indian Army was rapidly expanded from a pre-war strength of 160,000 men to a wartime high of nearly two million (BARKAWI 2006:330) and again during the first Indo-Pakistani War of 1947/48 in Kashmir, increased numbers of recruitments from Gojal could be seen (Figure 6).

Some of the earliest soldiers of Gojal had fled from Hunza illegally, without having the necessary permission by the *mir*. Severe poverty, high taxation and lack of local opportunities are most frequently mentioned as the reasons for flight from Gojal, but also personal conflicts within families, with villagers or with the representatives of the ruling class have been reported. Muhammad Khan of Hussaini describes how mobility was checked at the borders of Hunza:

“At Burum-Char [“white defile”; Burushaski term] is the place where the [mir’s] guards used to stay [to protect the border] and would not allow the subjects of Hunza to leave the area. There was the system of *rāhdāri* [travel permission]. It was necessary to get a permission letter [from the mir], and only then one could go. The Nagar people would guard the area, and Burum-Char is the place, just near Chalt, where the gorge is very narrow. Even though Hunza and Nagar were rival states, but to protect their common interests they cooperated and established joint guards at Burum-Char. If you had a *rāhdāri*, you could pass and go. If you had no *rāhdāri*, you were not allowed to pass but returned. No one could leave Hunza without permission. This has been established since the period of the British under Mir Nazim Khan [1891-1938]. There was also a levy involved [to get a *rāhdāri*], in the beginning it was one Rupee³, later it has been increased to two Rupees.”(Interview with the author, 26.10.2012)

As early as 1921 two Wakhi had fled from Gojal across the northern passes to Shughnan and joined the Bolshevik army there (Indian Office Library & Records: IOL/ P&S/10/973:238, cited in KREUTZMANN 2012:65). In the mid-1930s Sher Gazi from Gulmit had reportedly fled from Hunza to Skardu and joined the armed forces of Jammu and Kashmir. Gulban Ali, who is said to be the earliest man from the village of Passu who joined the military, had left Hunza in the late 1930s on permission by the *mir* to work as a tailor in Gilgit. From there he fled illegally, together with his friend Shambi from Passu, who had gone before him to Gilgit, to Srinagar in Kashmir in about 1940. Muhammad Gohar, 87 years old and one of the earliest military migrants from Passu, reports:

“When Gulban Ali and Shambi went to Gilgit, at that time there was the permission system by the mir. Therefore the two told the mir that they would like to go to Gilgit, and they succeeded in getting a permission letter. So they went to Gilgit on that permission, but did not return and instead proceeded to Kashmir, to Srinagar, and there joined the military. It was their luck!” (Interview with the author, 27.10.2012)

Both, Gulban Ali and Shambi, were recruited in the British Indian Army and posted in Ambala, 200km north of Delhi. During World War II, Gulban Ali was also posted in Burma. In his first furlough in 1942 he visited Passu and on his return he took two other young men from his village, Samar and Muhammad Hayat, with him to the military. In 1947, when Pakistan came into being, he was posted in Rawalpindi and subsequently deployed in Baltistan and fought in the first Indo-Pakistani War of 1947/48. After his retirement he reportedly became the first person in Gojal, who drew a regular military retirement pension.

Those early soldiers from Gojal, who found recruitment in the *Gilgit Scouts* in the 1940s did so with notice and permission by the *mir* of Hunza. Since 1935, the *Gilgit Scouts* were organized along four companies composed of platoons with recruits from particular principalities of the *Gilgit Agency* (STÖBER 2001:185; TRENCH 1986). Often, the *mir* of Hunza selected young men from influential families to fill the posts assigned to his principality as reward for their loyalty and its further consolidation. For example, Muhammad Jalil, son of the then village headman (*arbāb*) of Passu and

³ The local value of one Rupee in the 1930s equaled the price of a lamb (under one year old). The price for a sheep was about three Rupees, for a goat it was four Rupees, and for a cow 14 Rupees (KREUTZMANN 1989:233).

member of a *žaržon*-family, i.e. a family who enjoyed foster-relationships to the royal family of Hunza, was recruited in the *Gilgit Scouts* in April 1942 on recommendation of *Mir* Ghazan Khan and in order to accompany the son of former *Mir* Muhammad Nazim Khan, Mirzada Shah Khan, who joined the *Gilgit Scouts* at the same time. The companies and platoons of the *Gilgit Scouts* usually were “commanded by close relatives of the *mir* and *rajah* of the area, usually their sons and brothers” (Mirzada Shah Khan, cited in DANI 1991:312), in the position of so-called *Viceroy’s Commissioned Officer* (VCO). Mirzada Shah Khan himself had joined the *Gilgit Scouts* as a VCO and later commanded a section of a hundred men from Hunza, Nagar and Yasin in Kashmir during the Indo-Pakistani War in 1947/48 (DANI 1991:391). In this section at least three men from Passu, one from Hussaini and five men from other villages of Gojal were fighting. Many of the fresh recruits from Gojal to the *Gilgit Scouts* during the first Kashmir war had initially gone to Gilgit in winter 1947/48 (some of them clandestinely, without permission by the *mir* of Hunza) with the intention to seek for a seasonal labour opportunity, but then were given the chance to be recruited to the *Gilgit Scouts*, where soldiers were directly needed in times of war, and so rather by chance ended up in the military. The first organized military recruitment campaign within Hunza has been reported for 1954, when army personnel visited the villages of Gojal, selected promising youth and invited them for a medical check-up to Aliabad. But even then the *mir* of Hunza had the last say and could send back candidates to their villages, as e.g. Qazi Muhammad from Passu had to experience, as he reports in his biographical account.

Military service was one of the earliest sources of non-local monetary income for *Gojali* households. During their visits or when they returned to their village after retirement, the soldiers used to bring back cloth, household goods and money. Generally, the *Scouts* used to send the bigger part of their pay back home to their families instead of spending it for consumption on-site (STÖBER 2001:186). Mohammad Gohar of Passu, who was at the *Gilgit Scouts* from 1948 to 1963, remembers:

“There was no cooking pot here [in their homes in Passu], so we brought pots with us. We also brought clothes to our family members, and especially to our parents. We also brought some money for the need. When we joined the *Gilgit Scouts*, there was a pay of 29 Rupees⁴ per month. [...] In August 1963, I retired and started to receive a pension. When I returned to Passu, I got 1,500 Rupees⁵ from the military.” (Interview with the author, 27.10.2012)

The money earned during service and subsequently drawn from the guaranteed life-long pension for retired military personnel was channelled into a variety of investments. A substantial part was used for the extension of existing houses or the construction of new ones. Investments were also made in the education of family members, mostly sons or brothers. This type of investment grew in importance over the years and gradually was extended to girls as well. Many retired soldiers had established small-scale businesses in their home villages, e.g. small general stores, restaurants, tea stalls or workshops. Some engaged in trade, others in tourism. For example, Ali Gohar from Hussaini, who had served in the *Gilgit Scouts* from January 1948 to 1953 became one of the earliest mountaineering guides and porters from Gojal for foreign expeditions. He participated in the German Nanga Parbat expedition in 1955, in the Italian expedition to K2 in 1956, in a joint British-Pakistani

⁴ This equals 6.09 - 8.73 US-Dollar based on the official exchange rates in that period. Between 1947 and 1952, 1 US-Dollar equaled 3.32 Pakistani Rupees; between 1952 and 1972, 1 US-Dollar equaled 4.76 Pakistani Rupees (KREUTZMANN 1996:388).

⁵ This equals 315.13 US-Dollar based on the official exchange rates in that period.

expedition to Rakaposhi in 1958, and many more until 1978. Once he even guided the President of Pakistan Ayub Khan at that time to Zarabad near Hussaini for trophy hunting.

Many retired soldiers not only established businesses, but also engaged in their village affairs and became important agents of change. Some soldiers were given the opportunity to receive formal education or to continue their basic education during military service. Often they were among the most educated people of their village when they returned after retirement. For example, Muhammad Gohar of Passu was illiterate when he joined the *Gilgit Scouts* in 1948, but studied up to class eight during his service. On his return to Passu, he not only established a general store as his private business there, but also became proactive in advocating female education in Passu. When he returned to Passu from military service in 1963, there was only the Diamond Jubilee (DJ) Boy's Primary School existing in the village, but no opportunity for girls to be formally educated.

Along with others, he committed himself to the issue and became the founding head teacher of the girl's section of the DJ school when it was eventually established in 1968. Muhammad Gohar remembers:

"[At that time] there was a set norm: girls could not become clerk or khalifa [the only professions, for which education was considered necessary in former times]. So why should they get education? I was convincing the girls to come and to get education. I provided them with books from my shop and also gave them sweets. So I convinced them to come and to start to get education." (Interview with the author, 27.10.2012)

He continued to teach there for twelve years, during the first five years without any salary and also volunteered in different village-based social and religious institutions. Muhammad Gohar's case is exemplary for many returning military migrants, also for those of later years, who contributed with their knowledge and experience to the development of their communities.

During their period of service, the absenteeism of the soldiers meant a loss of workforce in the households to manage their agricultural and pastoral activities, which increased workloads for the non-migrated household members and tightened the scarcity of manpower in peak times, particularly during the harvest. Therefore, it was mostly not possible for households to have more than one man at a time in the military. But in many households we find the situation that some time after retirement and return of a pioneering military migrant; he encouraged and inspired other family members, often a brother or a son to join the military. In that way, shaped by kinship relations, a kind of a 'military tradition' has formed over the years in some families, featuring (ex-)army men across all generations. In other families, lacking a pioneering military migrant in their family tree, not a single man has ever served in the military.

However, the number of military migrants had reached its peak in Passu in the late 1940/early 1950, and in Hussaini in the 1960s, and since then is in decline. When in the 1980s and 1990s the *Aga Khan Development Network* started to activate so-called '*subedar*' (in this case retired army personnel from the Northern Areas) as 'agents of change' and tried to instrumentalize them for their community projects in contrast to other mountain valleys most villagers of Gojal had already made a step ahead. The first phase of out-migration from Gojal to the urban centres gave way to another type of migrants, who emerged in the 1950s and soon formed the dominant pattern of migration from Gojal: labour migration of young men to Karachi.

3.2. The long way to Karachi: the onset of labour migration from Gojal to Pakistan's biggest city

The early military migrants, who had experienced urban life, had learned about job and business opportunities there and gained awareness of the growing importance of formal education for the young generation's prospects, inspired others in their families and villages to seek new opportunities outside of Hunza and to try their luck in the cities. With their in-service pay, gratuity payment at their dismissal and regular retirement pensions, the early military migrants often also provided the necessary financial basis to enable travels and initial support for the next generation of pioneering migrants, formed by labour migrants to the cities.

Seasonal labour migration, particularly to Gilgit, was a frequent phenomenon from most valleys of the region even before British colonial times (STÖBER 2001:190). With the onset of the British rule and the expansion of Gilgit into the central garrison town, the demand for workers for the construction of new buildings, roads, bridges and telegraph lines rapidly increased. The *mir* of Hunza, though, obviously in fear of loss of control over his subjects, adhered to his policy of mobility restrictions to avert large-scale seasonal labour migration from Hunza, but could not fully prevent people from Hunza to "trickle into [the] town" of Gilgit (SÖKEFELD 1997: 87). In the late 1930s and early 1940s the number of seasonal and temporary labour migrants from Hunza to Gilgit had increased, Hunzukuts were allowed and started to buy land in and around Gilgit, and many households from Hunza resettled in new filial settlements north of Gilgit (KREUTZMANN 1989:183-184; SÖKEFELD 1997:87). But the Wakhi of Hunza were excluded by the *mir* of Hunza from these migration and resettlement options. On the contrary, the Wakhi had to contribute the highest amount of taxes and services to the Hunza State from agricultural production (KREUTZMANN 1989:184; 1996: 282-289).

With the exception of a few cases of migrants from Gojal to Gilgit and to Srinagar in Kashmir, labour migration from Gojal to the cities started only in the 1950s and soon gained momentum. The overwhelming majority of the labour migrants in the subsequent years were heading to Karachi.

At first sight, this choice of destination may seem unexpected, since these pioneering labour migrants could not build on pre-established inter-personal ties, social networks and exchange relations to Karachi. In addition, for migrants from Gojal, Karachi marks the geographically most distant place among the many urban centres within Pakistan. Some particular circumstances may help to explain, why of all cities just Karachi has been chosen as prime destination for labour migration, and subsequently also for education migration, from Gojal.

Karachi as the primary industrial and economic centre of the country, was a boom-town in the 1950s, and provided abundant job opportunities at very low cost of living. Young people from rural areas all over Pakistan were attracted to Karachi as 'the mother of the poor', as it is still termed by many early migrants. Ghulam Muhammad (of the Quli clan) of Passu remembers referring to the late 1950s: "Karachi was supposed to be a cheap city, and also [had] vast opportunities to get a job easily, industries were there, different companies were there, so it was easy for the people to get a job." (Interview with the author, 11.10.2011)

Karachi is home to the *khoja Ismailis*, an affluent trader and business community, who recognized – upon the order of their spiritual leader – the migrants from Gojal and Hunza as their poorer *Ismaili* brothers from the mountains, which were termed *maulai* in colonial times (KREUTZMANN 1996:35, 45).

Based on symbolic ties of being *Ismaili*, a small religious minority in Pakistan, many *khoja* supported the *maulai* migrants and provided them with jobs in their factories, hotels and enterprises as well as with employment as domestic servants in their homes. The important role of the *khoja* in supporting migrants from Gojal will be dealt with in greater detail below.

A first link to Karachi had been established in the 1940s by Ghulam Bakhir from the village of Gircha in Gojal, a religious scholar who is said to be the very first person from Gojal who has migrated to Karachi.

Probably also language issues have played a role in the migrant's decisions and preference for certain destinations. The first schools of the region were established just a few years before the first labour migrants went to Karachi. Many of them had attended a few years of schooling and obtained some proficiency of the Urdu language, the Pakistani national language and mother tongue of the *muhajir* in Karachi, refugees from the Indian part of the subcontinent, forming a substantial share of the city's population. Muhammad Khan of Hussaini, a son of a *žaržon* family, who fled as a young man from his obligatory service in the mir's palace in Baltit after a dispute with the mir in 1952 to Karachi, explained: "When I went to Karachi, I was not able to write, but I could speak Urdu. I had learned Urdu during my time in the mir's house. My proficiency of Urdu was another reason, why I opted for Karachi when I decided to flee from Hunza." (Interview with the author, 26.10.2012)

The earliest labour migrants to Karachi from the Gojal Region were Gul Muhammad from Gulmit and Muhammad Magh from Passu. Both have moved to Karachi in 1951 in search of employment. The first labour migrant from Hussaini to Karachi was Muhammad Khan, who reached there in 1952. Until 1960, another six labour migrants to Karachi from Hussaini and seven from Passu could be traced from the interviews.

These migrants were pioneers in a real sense, since they walked on a new path which no one had prepared for them. The link to Karachi did not exist at the time when they set out to this distant and unknown city. They were travelling alone or in small groups, sometimes clandestinely to elude surveillance of the *mir's* guards, and had to find out and organize themselves how to manage to get from Gojal to Karachi and where to go there. Young, unmarried men in their early twenties or even younger made a decision on their own and quit their parents, family and friends and set out to the unknown. They relied on recommendations, far acquaintances and distant relatives to find shelter and support on their way and the earliest of them did not know anybody in Karachi when they arrived. Though, the pioneering migrants themselves soon became well-known among the people in Gojal and subsequent migrants from a certain village seem to have been well-aware about the migrants from other villages in Gojal, who had gone before them and could serve as contacts and potential sources of support on their way to Karachi and after their arrival.

Pressing poverty, frequent food scarcity and lack of local income and life opportunities were mentioned most frequently by the interviewed early migrants as the reason, why they decided to go to Karachi for labour.

The travels and movements of the *Gojali* leaving Hunza were still checked by the *mir* of Hunza in the 1950s, even though less strictly than in the decades before. It seems that labour migration to Gilgit had become somehow accepted at that time and was possible without explicit permission, but travels beyond Gilgit were still banned. To prevent to be caught and sent back, many early migrants,

who intended to go to Karachi, kept their plans secret. For example, Izzatullah Beg of Passu reports that when he took his decision to leave his village covertly, he did not even tell his parents about his plans to go to Karachi for labour and with the desire to get education (Interview with the author, 12.10.2011). In 1959, when he was eighteen years old, he left his village by night together with two other young men from Passu. They walked for three days until they reached Gilgit. On their way to Gilgit, the clandestine migrants were under permanent threat of being discovered. Ghulam Muhammad (of the Quli clan) from Passu remembers his journey as a 19 years-old escapee in 1957 from Gojal to Gilgit:

“It was illegal and also a very challenging task to go to Gilgit. It was bad for the people of this area. I escaped [together] with more people. But suddenly on the way, the mir was on the way, he captured us. The younger brother of the mir, who was also with the mir, said we should be returned to our village. But the mir said, they are going for labouring, so let them go. So we went through a very crucial situation. [I was with] two more people [from Passu on the way] to Gilgit, they did not tell that we are going for higher education, [they said] we are going for labouring to earn for our homes. Then the mir let them [go]. But it was a very difficult situation.” (Interview with the author, 11.10.2011)

Once they had reached Gilgit, the clandestine migrants were still not safe. The group of Ghulam Muhammad was discovered by the *mir's* men and they were forced to return to Passu. Only Ghulam Muhammad managed to flee: “I got the opportunity, so I escaped from Gilgit to [Rawal-]Pindi, secretly” (Interview with the author, 11.10.2011). Izzatullah Beg and his two companions from Passu experienced the same situation when they had reached Gilgit in 1959. The *mir's* men had learned about their plans to buy a flight ticket to Rawalpindi and wanted to return them to their village. Izzatullah Beg remembers: “There was [someone] who said to me secretly, that there is one man from the family of the mir who is looking for you. You want to go? - By foot you go! Otherwise he can catch you and send [you back] to Passu” (Interview with the author, 12.10.2011). Izzatullah Beg and one of his companions managed to secretly proceed to Chilas and further up to the Babusar Pass, which they reached after three days of walking from Gilgit. From there they found a jeep which they could join in on its way to Rawalpindi.

During their stopover in Gilgit, the migrants from Gojal approached those people from their area who were already living in Gilgit and running businesses there as traders, craftsmen or running restaurants.

From Gilgit there were basically two options to proceed: either by airplane to Rawalpindi, or by road along the Indus and Kaghan Valleys served by passenger jeeps. Some of the migrants have continued on foot up to Babusar Pass, and reportedly even beyond. The weather-dependent flight connection established under British rule was taken over after Pakistan's independence in 1947 by Orient Airways, which in 1955 was merged into the newly-created Pakistani International Airlines (PIA). In the 1950s the flight connection was served by Dakota (Douglas C-47) military transport aircrafts. The airfare to Rawalpindi Chaklala Airbase was between 28 and 45 Rupees⁶ in the 1950s.

The migrants raised the necessary money for their travels by different means. Selling livestock was one way to quickly get money, which some of the early migrants used. Muhammad Khan of Hussaini got his trip to Karachi financed in this way after he had fled to Gilgit in 1952:

⁶ This equals 5.88-13.55 US-Dollar based on the official exchange rates in that period.

“The money which I brought to Gilgit was soon finished. So I went back to Hussaini, and sold some sheep to get the necessary money for the journey to Karachi. With this fresh money I went back to Gilgit. There I bought a flight ticket and flew with the ‘Dakota’ plane to Rawalpindi.” (Interview with the author, 26.10.2012)

Other migrants could draw from savings of their relatives, who had earned money in military service. For example, Qazi Muhammad of Passu financed his travel to Karachi in 1954 by taking 150 Rupees⁷ from the savings of his elder brother, who served in the *Northern Scouts*. Honar Beg of Passu was provided 60 Rupees⁸ for his travels to Karachi in 1959 by his father, who had worked as a post-runner up to Kashgar during the British era and had some savings from that. Muhammad Magh of Passu was himself in the military service before he went to Karachi for labour in 1951. Two more of the early labour migrants from Hussaini and Passu are close relatives of the earliest military migrants (Figure 6) and most probably their migration was financially supported by them.

On their way to Karachi, Rawalpindi was, after Gilgit, the second important stopover. Again, the migrants needed to seek orientation, support and shelter in the completely strange and unfamiliar environment of a large city. Muhammad Khan of Hussaini remembers his first arrival in Rawalpindi in 1952:

“We could manage to get along [in the city] by asking people. In Rawalpindi’s Raja Bazaar there was a place called ‘Gilgit Hotel’ [...]. This place was bought by the Imam of the time and provided for the *Ismaili* people who travelled through Rawalpindi free accommodation. Only for the food you had to pay. [...] When we reached Rawalpindi by plane, we directly went to the ‘Gilgit Hotel’.” (Interview with the author, 26.10.2012)

In that very place Muhammad Khan met his former primary school teacher from DJ Boys’ Primary School Gulmit, Momin Hayat from Central Hunza, who was now working as supervisor in the ‘Gilgit Hotel’. The ‘Gilgit Hotel’ was an important place for *Gojali* migrants on their way to Karachi. Here they found shelter for a few days and met other migrants with the mutual intention to go to Karachi, and sometimes they formed small groups and travelled the last stage to Karachi together.

Other migrants from Gojal arrived in Rawalpindi without any idea where to go and only had a few names of people from Gojal, whom they could contact. An illustrative example gives Qazi Muhammad from Passu:

“I flew [in September 1954] from Gilgit to Chaklala Airbase in Rawalpindi. When I arrived I didn’t know where to go. The PIA [at that time it was still Orient Airways] guys asked me, where I wanted to go. I told them that I didn’t know. So they put me in a PIA vehicle, which brought me to Saddar Bazaar in Rawalpindi. There I started to walk around and I remembered Bigiyar’s [a man from Gulmit, in whose hotel in Gilgit Qazi Muhammad stayed a few days on his way to Rawalpindi] advice that there is Baghsaf, and one of Bigiyar’s nephews, Qabat Shah, is there, and that I should meet them and that they would provide me help [...]. So I started to ask people in the bazaar here and there for Baghsaf. But they said there are dozens of Baghsafs here, we don’t know which one you mean. Three police officers in civil clothes, not in uniforms, took notice of me and asked me, where I wanted to go. I told them that I wanted to meet Baghsaf, but actually I want to go to Karachi. The police officers [who were

⁷ This equals 31.51 US-Dollar based on the official exchange rates in that period.

⁸ This equals 12.61 US-Dollar based on the official exchange rates in that period.

also on their way to Karachi for their duty] asked me to join them. They accompanied me to the train station and bought me a ticket to Karachi.” (Interview with the author, 27.10.2012)

Some labour migrants were lucky enough to find a job in Rawalpindi and stayed for a few years in the city. For example, Ghulam Muhammad of Passu and two brothers from the same village were working for one or two years in the textile industries in Rawalpindi in the late 1950s, before they moved on to Karachi. During their stay in Rawalpindi, they themselves became resource persons who were approached by subsequent migrants from Gojal in search of support and facilitation.

For the last stage from Rawalpindi to Karachi all the early labour migrants took the train. At that time there were still steam trains operating which ran by coal. The journey took two days and two nights and has frequently been described as very uncomfortable and challenging. A ticket was about 28-30 Rupees⁹ in the 1950s.

The earliest labour migrants from Gojal were after their arrival in Karachi confronted with the same situation as in Rawalpindi: they had no relatives in the city and often did not even know anybody personally there, but were equipped with some names of people from Hunza, and later on also of earlier migrants from other villages of Gojal. For example, Qazi Muhammad of Passu remembers: “After I arrived in Karachi [in 1954], I had no address and did not know with whom I could stay” (Interview with the author, 27.10.2012). He asked a cart driver to bring him to a place where *Ismailis* would reside, and so found his way to Bombardy from Baltit in Hunza, who was working as a driver for a *khojā Ismaili*. Bombardy, whom he did not know personally before, took him to the Aga Khan School in the Kharadar Area (established in 1926). Qazi Muhammad:

“All the migrants from Gilgit-Baltistan who were *Ismailis* used to reside in the compound of the Aga Khan School in Kharadar Area. They had made a kind of huts and used to live there within the compound of the school. At that time there lived about 38 persons, all were *Ismailis* from Gilgit-Hunza” (Interview with the author, 27.10.2012).

Through these migrants he eventually got in contact with Gul Muhammad from Gulmit, in whose place he could spend the first time, until he had found a job thanks to the contacts of another *Gojali* migrant from Chupursan Valley, whom he had met in the Aga Khan School compound in Kharadar.

Those *Gojali* migrants, who reached Karachi without personal contacts usually headed to the neighbourhoods where *khoja Ismailis* and *Ismaili* institutions were present and where other migrants from Hunza and Gojal used to live in Karachi since the 1950s: The *Kharadar Area*, located close to the port, where some early migrants found labouring positions in the *Karachi Port Trust* (KPT) in the *Kiamari Area*; the *Garden Area*, where the *Garden Jamat Khana*, the *Aga Khan Garden School* and a number of other *Ismaili* institutions were located; the *Shershah Area*, close to an industrial area offering employment; the *Karimabad Colony* in Gulberg; Nazimabad and Landhi¹⁰. Other migrants first approached one of the companies, where they knew that people from their area were working. For example, Honar Beg of Passu narrates that when he, on his way to Karachi, arrived in Rawalpindi in 1959, a young *Gojali* Wakhi from the Chupursan Valley helped him to get a train ticket and recommended him to immediately head to the *Souvenir Tobacco Company* after his arrival in Karachi,

⁹ This equals 5.88 - 9.04 US-Dollar based on the official exchange rates in that period.

¹⁰ H. Papanek (1962:12, cited in Kreutzmann 1989:192) additionally mentions the *Ismaili* neighbourhoods in Ranchores Lines, Kalri, Lassi, Fidai Colony, Patel Para and Malir.

where he would meet other *Gojali* migrants (Interview with the author, 28.10.2012). In this tobacco company, owned by a *khoja Ismaili* entrepreneur and located in the *Shershah Area*, many of the early labour migrants from Gulmit, Hussaini and Passu had found employment. Also other enterprises, factories and hotels of *khoja Ismaili* owners were an important source of employment for the *Ismaili* migrants from the north. In addition, some *maulai* migrants found employment as cooks and domestic servants in the private homes of *khojas*. Ghulam Muhammad (of the Quli clan) of Passu remembers: “If any of the owners of the companies was from our [*Ismaili*] community, it was easy for us and we had an opportunity to work for him.[...] They [the employers] were giving favour if they [the job seekers] were from the same sect” (Interview with the author, 11.10.2011). Additional employment opportunities for the *Ismaili* migrants from the north were offered in the *Ismaili* Institutions in Karachi (KREUTZMANN 1989:192). For example, Qazi Muhammad of Passu, one of the earliest labour migrants to Karachi from that village, found employment in the *Ismailia Association* in Karachi as early as 1955, where already two other *Ismaili* migrants from Altit (Central Hunza) were working. Before that, he was working as domestic servant in the private house of Pir Muhammad Hoodbhoy, the then president of the *Ismaili Supreme Council for Pakistan*. But the *khoja* entrepreneurs and the *Ismaili* institutions were not the exclusive employers for *maulai* migrants, and some of them worked for non-*khoja* employers and as domestic servants in non-*Ismaili* homes, as well.

The migrants from Hunza formed a closely interlinked diaspora group in Karachi, which was supported by living close to each other in shared neighbourhoods. Migrants from Gojal knew about most other migrants from their area and often had intensive exchange and relations with them even across different neighbourhoods in Karachi. The *Ismaili* diaspora group formed an important support network for newly arriving migrants from the north, based on the shared identities of being *Ismaili* from Hunza or adjacent areas, being from the same ethno-linguistic group (e.g. Wakhi), being from the same sub-region or valley (e.g., Gojal), being from the same village or based on kinship relations, neighbourhood and friendship. Newly arriving migrants were supported through this network in Karachi, e.g. in finding accommodation, getting contacts and finding a job. Information, news and knowledge about opportunities were shared within the migrant diaspora. Once the newcomers were settled in the new environment, they themselves became a source of support for the next round of newly arriving migrants from the north. Honar Beg of Passu remembers: “I knew some people from Chupursan and from Gulmit [when I arrived in Karachi]. These guys were already there and when I reached Karachi, they helped me in getting a job. And when I was there, I also helped others in getting jobs there” (Interview with the author, 28.10.2012). When one of the migrants got sick and was unable to work, he was supported by his fellows, and those who worked in health sector facilities (e.g. in clinics, pharmacies or institutions of the *Aga Khan Health Service*) provided medicine and treatment for free or at reduced rates. The *Ismaili* migrant diaspora in Karachi formed a strong support network providing protection, assistance and facilitation for its members. Particularly in the early days, support was provided based on a variety of symbolic and social ties, reaching from being *Ismaili* to being from Hunza and Gojal, being a Wakhi, being from the same village, being friends, or being remote or close relatives.

Besides temporal makeshift arrangements, as described above for the Aga Khan School in Kharadar, the migrants used to live together in shared rented flats. Often twenty, thirty or more migrants from the north lived together in two or three-room flats in order to bring the individual accommodation

costs down by sharing the about 40 Rupees¹¹ monthly rent. In the late 1950s in Karachi, an unskilled labourer's monthly income was about 30 to 100 Rupees¹², while his living expenses, including food and accommodation, were about 20 Rupees¹³ per month. The remaining surplus allowed some labour migrants to save some of their income and to support their families back in the villages. Since there was no system allowing monetary transfers into Gojal, remittances were sent in form of household goods, cloth, clothes, quilts, medicine, food items, tea and other commodities in regularly, often monthly, sent parcels or brought along personally at occasional visits to the home village every few years. For most of the migrants it took a couple of years before they could afford for the first time to travel back to their home village for an extended visit; other migrants relied on micro-credits and support from fellow migrants for these travels. To return to the village with gifts and money was expected from the labour migrants by their family members and was a source of respect in the community. Qazi Muhammad of Passu remembers his first visit to Passu after three years of labouring in Karachi:

“When I came back to Passu for the first time, I had earned 700 Rupees¹⁴ in Karachi, which I brought with me. When I reached Gilgit on my way to Passu, I bought there food stuffs, domestic needs for the household and clothes for all my relatives, including all my nieces and nephews from Gulmit to Khyber for about 500 Rupees¹⁵” (Interview with the author, 27.10.2012).

Some visiting migrants also used the occasion for small-scale trade. For example, Muhammad Khan of Hussaini brought with him some kilograms of tea from Karachi when he visited his village in 1957, and sold it on a profitable rate in his village. Those migrants, who could not succeed to bring back money and gifts are even today still remembered and bantered in their fellow migrants' narratives for 'coming back with empty hands and no money'. Travels from Karachi to the village in Gojal usually were undertaken in small groups of migrants. At their return from the village to Karachi, these migrants usually took along with them an additional number of other young men from different villages of Gojal, who intended to go for labour and later on for education in Karachi.

The experiences of the early labour migrants from Gojal reveal how strongly the migrants of the initial phase of migration to Karachi depended on assistance and facilitation for their travels and for arranging and establishing themselves in the new urban environment. For increasing numbers of young men from Gojal, migration to Karachi became a viable option only thanks to the encouragement and offer of assistance by preceding migrants from the region, who formed well-connected support networks in-place as well as bridging the space between Gojal and Karachi. In addition, the assistance for the *maulai* migrants provided by *khoja* in Karachi and the *Ismaili* community institutions enhanced the support network on which they could rely based on symbolic ties of being *Ismaili*, and paved the way for the decisive next step from labour migration to education migration.

¹¹ This equals 8.40 US-Dollar based on the official exchange rates in that period.

¹² This equals 6.30-21.01 US-Dollar based on the official exchange rates in that period.

¹³ This equals 4.20 US-Dollar based on the official exchange rates in that period.

¹⁴ This equals 146.06 US-Dollar based on the official exchange rates in that period.

¹⁵ This equals 105.04 US-Dollar based on the official exchange rates in that period.

3.3. From workers to students: how Karachi became the hot-spot for higher education for the *Gojali* Wakhi

The strong solidarity within the *Ismaili* migrant group in Karachi, their close ties to their families in the villages in Gojal as well as the intensive contact and exchange with the *khoja Ismailis* in Karachi provided the economic, social and cultural environment, in which the shift of the *Gojali* Wakhi migrants from unskilled labour migration to student migration in higher levels of education took place. *Gojali* labour migrants started to invite and encourage close relatives to join them to Karachi for higher education, and offered them their full support for their studies. Other labour migrants themselves got enrolled in schools and colleges in Karachi and thus turned into 'student-workers', combining labouring with the acquisition of formal education.

In the narrative interviews with village elders and former migrants of Gojal, late Gul Muhammad of Gulmit has been mentioned consistently as the earliest student migrant from Gojal to Karachi. Before him, already some members of the ruling class used to go for the sake of education to Srinagar in the Kashmir Valley (until 1947), to Gilgit, where in 1892 the first school of the region was established (MEHR DAD 1995), or to Central Hunza, where the first school of the Hunza state was established in 1912 (NAZAR 2009:2). Gul Muhammad migrated in 1951 to Karachi and started to work there in a paint-producing factory. Soon he enrolled in a night school to continue his primary education from Gulmit at the middle school level. He worked in the paint factory during the day and attended classes in the evenings – an arrangement which became the dominant pattern of 'student-workers', i.e. labouring and studying for *Gojali* migrants in the coming years. Gul Muhammad succeeded in passing his matriculation (high school) in 1957 (reportedly, he was the first from Gojal who completed his high school), completed his Bachelor degree in commerce from Karachi University in 1970, and subsequently found employment in the financial division of the *Karachi Development Authority*. Later on, he achieved a leading management position in the *Agricultural Bank of Pakistan*. Gul Muhammad, as the first migrant who shifted from unskilled labour to education and who proved with his subsequent professional career the high potential of success implicit in education strategies, inspired and also assisted many other *Gojali* migrants to similarly turn to education. Ghulam Muhammad (of the Quli clan) of Passu remembers:

"He helped those, who came from here. He helped them and [the] people got awareness that there are more opportunities to get education and also to work part-time, to earn [money, to bear] their costs. He was a role model for the people of this area, because he worked very hard besides his studies, he worked himself and also helped other students, who came from here [Gojal]" (Interview with the author, 11.10.2011).

Gul Muhammad also became one of the central figures in an anti-feudal movement formed by student migrants from Hunza in Karachi in the late 1960s, who agitated with their organization *Idāra Taraqqi-e-Hunza (Hunza Development Organization)* through letters, public announcements and rallies and later supported by the *Pakistan Peoples Party* under Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, for the abolition of the feudal rule in Hunza and for the disempowering of *mir* Muhammad Jamal Khan. In 1974, the Bhutto government eventually ended the Hunza princely state and disempowered the *mir*. Some figures from Hunza, who had actively participated in the anti-*mir* movement subsequently were rewarded with positions in the government sector and experienced a boost in their careers.

The earliest student migrant from Hussaini to Karachi was Amir Ullah Beg, who went in 1960 and attended middle school in Karachi besides part-time labour. From Passu, the earliest student migrants were Izzatullah Beg and Ghulam Muhammad (of the Sakhi clan), who both went in 1959 to Karachi. Izzatullah Beg attended middle and high school in Karachi and fully self-supported his education by working in a factory and attending night school classes; he became the first Matriculate (high school graduate) from Passu. Ghulam Muhammad, being from a better-off family with close relations to the ruler of Hunza, was in a more comfortable position and never had to work part-time during his studies. Qazi Muhammad, his paternal uncle who was in Karachi as a labour migrant already since 1954, fully supported his education up to intercollege level in Karachi and also during his further studies in Lahore. After these early educational pioneers, who were famous throughout Gojal and who served as role-models for others, the number of student migrants started to increase, with more and more young men starting to move out of Gojal and heading to Karachi for higher education.

A number of driving factors are involved in the emergence and subsequent rapid rise of student migration from Gojal to Karachi. Probably the most important among them are (1) regional and local changes of socio-economic and environmental conditions in Gojal; (2) the education-related initiatives and *farman* (messages) of Aga Khan who strongly encouraged and requested his followers to put high emphasis on formal education; (3) the importance of the *khoja Ismaili* group in Karachi as employers, role models and source of support for education; and (4) the support which earlier migrants from Gojal to Karachi offered on-site for student migrants, embedded in and facilitated by the *Ismaili* migrants' strong social networks and established mechanisms of self-help solidarity.

1) Regional and local changes of socio-economic and environmental conditions

The decades of the 1960s and 70s, in which the decisive shift from labour to student migration took place and the subsequent years featuring rapidly rising numbers of student migrants are characterized by major socio-economic changes in Hunza and Gojal, which modified livelihood conditions and initiated a series of far-reaching transformations. The abolition of feudal rule and deposition of the *mir* of Hunza in 1974 freed the people of Gojal from the pressures of high tax burden and compulsory labour. Hunza was integrated into the Pakistan's administrative structure, administrative institutions advanced into the valley, and the Federal Government initiated measures to develop the region, i.e. by investments in infrastructure, the abolition of direct taxes and transport subsidies (KREUTZMANN 1993:28). Public infrastructure extension projects in the region were implemented by the *Northern Areas Public Works Department* (NAPWD; established as *Northern Areas Works Department*), the *Frontier Works Organization* (FWO, established 1966) and in the context of the *Community Basic Services Programme* (established in 1981) (KREUTZMANN 1989:199-200, 1993:36). The gradual expansion of the road network since the 1950s tremendously improved accessibility of the region (KREUTZMANN 1991, 1993, 2009) and ceasing travel restrictions further fostered mobility. The completion of the KKH in 1978 substantially intensified exchange relations of Hunza with Pakistan, providing new opportunities for cash-crop marketing and making available a huge variety of consumer goods in local bazaars. Food supply of local households increasingly depended on purchased imported food items since the local production base was less and less capable to sustain the growing population and the agricultural production deficit grew (KREUTZMANN 1993:30). This increased dependency on marketed items from non-local production and made monetary income a necessity for virtually all households of the region. At the same time, new income

opportunities came up in the late 1970s, and a trend of income diversification of the households of the region set in, where subsistence production was complemented by market production and off-farm income generation from trade, services, crafts and formal employment, which often implied spatial mobility. The improved accessibility and the opening of Gojal for foreigners in 1982 attracted increasing numbers of mountaineers, trekkers and other international visitors to the region and made tourism a growing business. The new road connection to China provided opportunities for engagement in cross-border trade. Lowered costs and durations of transports to 'down-country' markets made Gojal attractive for the production of niche cash-crop products, such as seed and ration potatoes, vegetable seeds and different varieties of fruit, dry fruit and nuts. Cash-crop production and marketing was facilitated since the mid-1980s by government-sponsored projects, internationally funded programmes (e.g., the FAO/UNDP sponsored *Integrated Rural Support Programme*), and by the *Aga Khan Rural Support Programme* (AKRSP) (KREUTZMANN 1989:200-207). Training programmes enhanced local knowledge on farming and animal husbandry. New agricultural techniques and varieties were introduced and supportive institutions for rural development, such as credit programmes, cooperative societies and marketing organizations, were established. Despite of all these efforts, the agricultural sector in most households did no longer suffice to make a living and only complemented the off-farm sector activities, which constantly grew in importance. The expanding public administration and government services as well as development programmes of the *Aga Khan Development Network* (AKDN) and other NGOs in the fields of education, health and rural development, some of them assisted by international donor money, provided new off-farm income options in the region, in which returning student migrants found qualified professional employment. Others were looking for job positions in the cities of 'down-country' Pakistan and provide with their remittances important contributions to the household budgets in the region. The key for access to these off-farm employment and income opportunities is formal education and higher educational credentials, whose acquisition is only possible by migrating to sites of learning outside of Gojal. These changes turned formal education from an exclusive affair of the feudal elites before the mid-1940s into a central necessity and highly esteemed objective for all (BENZ 2011, 2013), for whose achievement people were ready to take up huge efforts and sacrifices in the context of student migration. Education and mobility are at the very core of a general shift in the livelihood basis from local resource utilization and agricultural production towards non-local resources and off-farm income generation.

In the case of Passu, a series of devastating floods caused by the Shimshal River, a tributary of the Hunza River, during the early 1960s destroyed huge proportions of the irrigated farmland of the village, which for some households meant the loss of their livelihood basis (KREUTZMANN 2012). These events further strengthened some people's decision to seek for a future beyond the agro-pastoral livelihoods of their forefathers by opting for migration, education and off-farm sources of income outside Gojal. Even though a number of affected families opted for resettlement in other villages of Gojal and continued their commitment for combined mountain agriculture, more and more young men saw no future for themselves in agriculture and in the region. Ashraf Khan, a villager of Passu remembers: "When the Shimshal flood came down and flooded the [village] area, our land resources were washed away. So there was little [land left] to do something here, that's why people had to go out." Similarly, Ahmad Karim, teacher in the local primary school, narrates: "There was erosion by the river, the [village] lands were destroyed by the [flood coming down the] Shimshal River. It started in the 1960s, and then people decided to go to the cities, because they had no [longer a] source of income" (Interview with the author, 27.10.2012). Generally, in local narratives the beginning of out-

migration to Karachi from Passu and the series of damaging floods in the early 1960s are closely linked, even though a number of migrants had already gone before these events to Karachi. The loss of land affected many, but by far not all households of the village. In addition, the migration decisions have to be seen in the context of the general livelihood shifts outlined above, in which the loss of arable land affecting some households to varying degrees was only one factor among many others.

2) Education sector initiatives and guidance by the 'Imam of the Time'

Speeches and initiatives by the then spiritual leader of the *Ismailis*, Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan III, and his grandson and successor Shah Karim al-Hussaini Aga Khan IV, had an important stake in providing the preconditions and creating the socio-cultural context for the first student migrants from Gojal. As part of the Aga Khan's Diamond Jubilee (DJ) school programme, the first six formal schools of Gojal had been established in 1946/47, all of them boys' primary schools. With this, for the first time formal education became accessible for 'ordinary' (male) *Gojali* in a region where up to then only an informal system of education, the so-called *khalifa*-system, had existed, in which religious knowledge was passed on from father to son within particular families across generations (NAZAR 2009:23). From Hussaini and Passu, most of the pioneering student migrants to Karachi had got their primary education from one of these DJ Schools before (sometimes after an intermediate stage of education in government schools in Central Hunza or in Gilgit) they went to Karachi to continue their education. The Aga Khan schools provided an important educational basis, on which the early labour migrants or their close relatives could build on. Probably equally important to establishment of basic school infrastructure on the initiative of the Aga Khan III were his and his successor's speeches and guiding messages (*farman*) to his followers. In 1960, Shah Karim al-Hussaini travelled to Hunza, conducting the first ever visit of an Aga Khan to the region, which was followed by several subsequent visits. In many of the Aga Khan's messages, which are spread to the *Ismaili* communities through reading in the *jamat khana* (community centres), they stressed the importance of formal education, for boys and girls alike, and encouraged their community (*jamat*) to strive and struggle hard for education at all levels, including higher education in the cities implying student migration. These *farman* also inspired the educational pioneers from Gojal, as Ashraf Khan of Passu states: "If people [of Gojal] initiated for education, the main factor was that it was a directive of our Imams [Aga Khan III and Aga Khan IV], who time and again through their directives, their so-called *farman*, their decrees, called for education. Through that sensitization had come up" (Interview with the author, 27.10.2012). The *Aga Khan Education Services* (AKES), as part of the *Aga Khan Development Network* (AKDN), provided with its own education facilities, its own hostel arrangements, coaching classes for students in their final year and scholarship programmes accessible for people from Hunza and Gojal, the necessary conditions for the implementations of their demands.

3) Support by the *Khoja Ismailis* in Karachi

The *khoja* are mainly descendants of former Hindus of the *Lohana* caste in Sindh, Kuch, and Gujarat, who had converted in the 14th century to the Nizariya, the eastern line of the *Ismailiya* (DAFTARY 1998, 2007; KREUTZMANN 1989:151). The *maulai*, as the *Ismailis* of the mountain areas of the Pamir, Karakorum and Hindukush are termed, trace back their Nizari *Ismaili* religious origins to the missionary activities of Nasir-i-Khisrau in the 11th century (KREUTZMANN 1989:151). The two groups of

the *khoja* and the *maulai* have developed historically along completely different and unconnected lines. Particularly the *maulai* groups were isolated from exchange with and developments in the Nizariya. The spiritual and fiscal authority of the Aga Khan I (tracing back his descent via Shah Ismail, the seventh Imam, to Ali, the first Imam) over the *khoja* was affirmed in the so-called “*khoja* process” in Bombay in 1866 and also the other disperse Nizari groups accepted the authority of the Aga Khan. It was only under Aga Khan III, that intensified endeavours were undertaken in order to more strongly connect the *maulai* groups with the rest of the Nizariya under the joint authority of the Aga Khan and common, standardized rules and institutions (DAFTARY 1998:198, 2007:475-476). Efforts of the Aga Khan to improve the living conditions of the *maulai* were launched in the mountain regions and intensified in the Gilgit-Baltistan region and Chitral after the partition of the Indian subcontinent and the establishment of Pakistan in 1947. In the course of partition, many *khoja* families, trading houses and enterprises shifted from Bombay to Karachi, thus turning the *khoja* into a small, but influential group of industrialists and entrepreneurs in the newly formed state¹⁶. Intra-communal social funds, fed by earnings from religious tribute payments of the *Ismailis*, were used to launch projects in the fields of health, education and (micro-)credit, through which the *maulai* indirectly benefitted from the economic strength of the *khoja*. The efforts to integrate the Northern *jamats* into the Pakistani *Ismaili* organizational setup were pushed forward with the first visit of the Aga Khan III to Gilgit and Hunza in 1960, with the introduction of the *Ismaili* Constitution in Northern Pakistan in 1969 (HOLZWARH 1994; KREUTZMANN 1996:308) and the incorporation of the different regional councils in Gilgit-Baltistan under the structure of the Federal Council for Pakistan in 1976 (KREUTZMANN 1989:157). By these efforts, the two formerly unconnected groups of the *maulai* and the *khoja* were brought together in a joint religious framework and recognized in each other their fellow *Ismailis*. This provided the basis for intra-communal solidarity based on symbolic ties, which could be utilized in various ways by the *maulai* migrants from the mountains in Karachi in form of employment and scholarships for education. In addition, employment in *Ismaili* institutions offered further opportunities and related benefits, e.g. the remission of fees for children and relatives in the Aga Khan schools in Karachi. For example, Qazi Muhammad of Passu had found employment in the *Ismailia Association* in Karachi in 1956 and could enrol his nephew, whom he invited to Karachi for his education for free in the Aga Khan School in Kharadar. Other migrants from Gojal narrated cases, in which their *khoja* employers offered support for their relatives’ education. Honar Beg of Passu, who worked in the *Souvenir Tobacco Company* in Karachi in the early 1960s remembers: “When I was operator in the *Souvenir Tobacco Company*, I asked the owner that he should give money for at least five students from this area [Gojal] to educate them” (Interview with the author, 28.10.2012). The owner agreed and enabled five young men from Gojal, who were workers in his company, to study by exempting them from the usual shift rotation system, in order to enable their regular school attendance. They worked in fixed shifts from six in the morning to two in the afternoon, and after that went to school. This support and arrangement by the tobacco company owner laid the foundation for impressive careers: of these five students, one joined the Education Department in Gilgit, one became an advocate in the USA, one a leading manager in a five-star hotel and another managing director of NATCO (*Northern Areas Transport Cooperation*). Another example of employer’s support is Amir Ullah of Hussaini, who was given the chance to attend a six-month medical training at the *Dow Medical College* in Karachi in the 1960s, which was fully paid by his

¹⁶ According to G.F. Papanek (1962:54), the *khoja Ismaili* made up only 0.1% of Pakistan’s population, but were commanding 5% of all industrial investments of the country in 1958.

employer, a *khoja Ismaili* medical doctor, in whose clinic and pharmacies Amir Ullah was working for several years.

In addition to their direct support in form of employment and scholarships, the *khoja*, as a highly cultured community, also served as role model for the *Ismaili* migrants from the north for putting emphasis on education and raising awareness of its importance in a rapidly changing world. Being “the most educated, westernized group among the major business communities” in Pakistan (PAPANEK 1968, cited in: Kreutzmann 1989:156), the *khoja* epitomized the successful realization of the educational imperative formulated by the Aga Khan in various of his *farman*.

4) The role of social networks of support and solidarity

With increasing numbers of newly arriving migrants from the north, the *Ismaili* diaspora in Karachi grew into a strong and intensively interlinked community, which offered support and assistance for its members and for newcomers. Shared flats, association in particular neighbourhoods, saving groups and micro-credit, self-help groups and job procurements are some aspects which have already been mentioned. As early as 1967 the student migrants from Gojal formally organized themselves and established the *Gojal Ismailia Students Association* (GISAK) in Karachi with the aim of the improvement of *Gojali* migrant students’ situation. The creation of GISAK, which is still active in Karachi today, was followed by the establishment of various village-based student associations in the subsequent decades. Since the migrants of the 1960s and 70s could not expect financial support from their relatives in Gojal (few households commanded local monetary income, due to lack of employment and business opportunities in the region), they fully relied on their own income generation and on support by fellow migrants. Both these options were given in the geographically distant city Karachi. Paradoxically, much nearer places like Central Hunza and Gilgit were inaccessible for most *Gojali* student migrants, since they had no relatives there who would support them, and they could not self-support their studies by part-time work, since no jobs and industries were available there. It seems that in the earliest years of migration, support for *maulai* migrants in Karachi was provided based on different levels of shared identities and symbolic ties (being *Ismaili*, *Wakhi*, *Gojali*), since pre-migration personal acquaintances between migrants were rare. But with increasing numbers of migrants to Karachi, more and more migrants already knew each other personally, and social ties became the most important basis for mutual support. Among these, family ties and kinship relations played a crucial role for providing support and assistance, which eventually allowed for the first student migrants.

Ghulam Muhammad (of the Quli clan) of Passu describes how the early soldiers and labour migrants contributed to make possible education migration to Karachi:

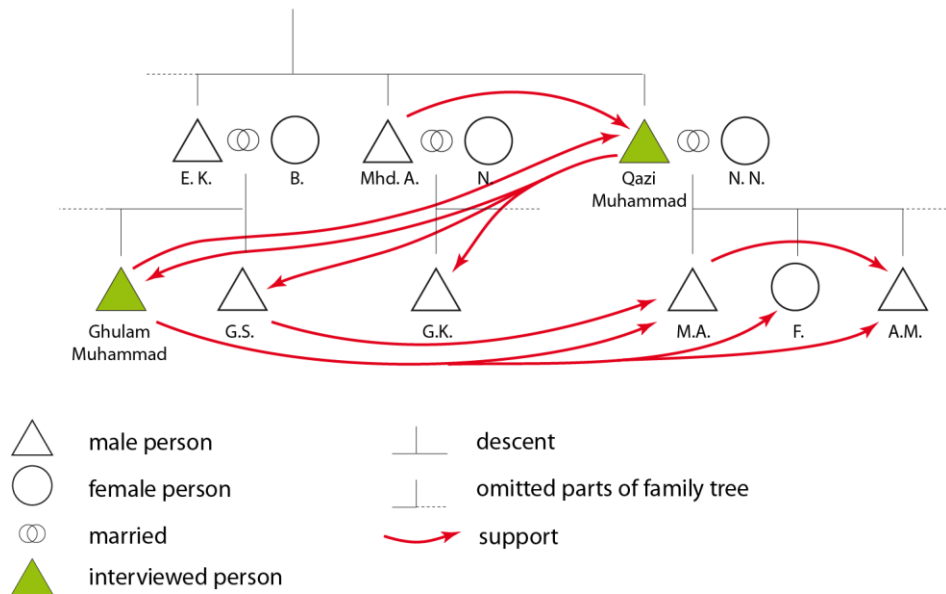
“As they started primary education here in Passu, in the DJ School, some of the students of that primary school joined the Pakistani Army, and some of them went outside the village, like I myself, I went to Karachi. And then they also asked their brothers to come to Karachi for higher education. So when the first primary batch started their journey in education, some of them joined the army, some of them used to go outside the village to Karachi, so they started the mobility of the students. They started to bring their brothers and sisters to Karachi to give them higher education” (Interview with the author, 11.10.2011).

In many cases, the early labour migrants invited their brothers, cousins, sons or nephews to join them in Karachi, convinced hesitating relatives to let them go, and they often personally

accompanied the new-coming student migrants to Karachi on their return from a visit to the village. They paid the travel expenses, and provided them in-place support in form of free accommodation, food, guidance, contacts and by bearing their living and education expenses, often with great personal sacrifice. For example, Ghulam Muhammad of Passu, who was since 1959 in Karachi working in a garment factory, invited his younger brother in 1963 to join him in Karachi and supported his education there. Ghulam Muhammad himself had dreamt of continuing his local primary education, but could not do so due to lack of finance and since he had no relative to support him in Karachi: "I didn't get any chance to continue my education, but I supported my brother to give him a good education, higher education. I worked for him, I sacrificed my career for him"(Interview with the author, 11.10.2011). He supported his brother to study up to a bachelor degree plus a bachelor of education degree, enabling him to later work as a teacher in government schools in Gojal.

Ahmad Karim of Passu had nobody who would support him, when he arrived in Karachi in 1970 for his high school education. He shared a rented flat with 18 other people from Passu, some of them close relatives of him, but did not get any financial support. Many of his roommates were student-workers, working in B- and C-shifts in the afternoons and during nights and attending schools and colleges in the morning. Others went to night schools and were working during daytime. Due to this rotation system, the small flat would only get very crowded on weekend nights, when all the night-shifters had a night off. Ahmad Karim soon found a job in the *Souvenir Tobacco Factory*, where a number of other *Gojali* migrants were working, which allowed him together with a two-years scholarship by the *Aga Khan Education Service* to complete his high school. During his intercollege and bachelor studies, he found a well-paid position in a silk weaving mill owned by a Chinioti entrepreneur (another important entrepreneur and industrialist community in Karachi; see G.F. Papanek 1962), which allowed him not only to continue his education, but also to invite his younger brother to Karachi in 1975 and to support his education up to the MBBS (bachelor of medicine and surgery) level. While his brother became a medical doctor and permanently settled in Karachi, Ahmad Karim returned after his bachelor graduation in 1982 to Passu and became the head teacher of the local middle school.

This system of support for new-coming migrants by earlier migrants within family and kinship networks triggered off a chain reaction, where one successful migration effected and facilitated a number of new migrations. Those migrants who had earlier benefitted from support of their relatives, who enabled them to acquire higher education and to realize professional careers and comparatively high incomes, themselves became a source of support for other family members, complying expectations of income redistribution and reciprocity of support within these social networks.



Design: Benz 2013

Figure 7: Support in a selected family network of the Sakhi clan of Passu

A good example for such a chain of migration and support across different generations of migrants within family networks provides a selected family branch of the Sakhi *kutór* (clan) of Passu (Figure 7). Mhd., one of three brothers, was the first migration pioneer of this family. In 1947 he was provided the opportunity there to be recruited to the *Northern Scouts* in Gilgit and joined the military service. His younger brother Qazi Muhammad became the second pioneer migrant of the family, when he travelled to Karachi for labour in 1954 without having relatives or friends in the city. His travel expenses and starting money were covered by savings from his brother’s military pay. Qazi Muhammad managed to find a place in Karachi, where a group of other migrants from Hunza lived, and stayed with them. With their help, he soon found his first job in the *Karachi Port Trust*, and later on worked as peon in *the Ismailia Association* in Karachi. He stayed for about 40 years in Karachi. During that time he supported many newly arriving migrants from Passu and other villages of Gojal by providing them shelter, contacts, and orientation in the new environment and assisted them in finding jobs and a place to live. He remembers: “I gave advice to them and sensitized them that they should also bring their family [members] here. I told them that when one person gets employment, that they have to educate their family members” (Interview with the author, 27.10.2012). On return from a visit to Passu in 1959, Qazi Muhammad took his nephew Ghulam Muhammad with him to Karachi as the first student migrant from his village. Qazi Muhammad fully supported his nephew’s education in Karachi and continued to financially support him even during his engineering studies in Lahore. Ghulam Muhammad (of the Sakhi clan) became the first engineer of Passu and reportedly of whole Gojal. Qazi Muhammad also supported two other nephews’ education by taking them to Karachi, providing them with free accommodation and food as well as paying their costs for education and living expenses. After completion of their education and being in well-paid jobs they started to support other family members. The nephews, who had received support from Qazi Muhammad, in reciprocation financially supported three of his children’s education up to the master’s level. Also, Ghulam Muhammad invited his uncle Qazi Muhammad with his wife and

children to live in his flat in Karachi, and he provided him with a fixed share of his monthly salary. Ghulam Muhammad remembers: “My income was not only for me. It was for the whole of the kids who were getting education down in Karachi”(Interview with the author, 11.09.2011). His flat in Karachi became a culmination point for many members of the extended family network who came to Karachi. In peak times, up to 18 family members were living there. In this manner, a whole network of mutual support for migration and education spread within this family system resulting among other things in producing seven engineers from this family network.

The migration history within this family system exemplifies a number of processes and characteristics of general importance for the *Gojali* migration dynamics of that period. It shows the progression from military migration to labour migration and eventually to student migration. It shows how migrants from the previous stage enabled the next stage: pay from the military was used to finance labour migration to Karachi, and labour migrants in turn enabled their relatives’ education migration to Karachi. The case shows how, starting from individual pioneering migrants in a family, a large number of subsequent migrations were introduced by chains of support and solidarity within kinship networks. Based on established norms of reciprocity, family and community solidarity and resource distribution in the Wakhi society of Gojal, many family members benefitted from an individual person’s good position and high income. Expectations of solidarity and mutual support prevent individual use of resources, but rather encourage supporting relatives with money, accommodation and food, contacts and facilitation locally as well as across the different locations of increasingly multi-local family networks. Providing support strengthens and increases personal reputation and status in the family and in society, while refusing to provide support, despite of having the means to do so, is socially disregarded. The example of Qazi Muhammad shows, how migrants initially relied and benefitted from support within the *Ismaili* migrants’ community in Karachi, and how they themselves became a source of support and functioned as brokers for further migration within and beyond their kinship networks. This again can be seen from the example of Ghulam Muhammad, who turned into a migration broker and source of support after his graduation and starting his professional career. Such snowball effects of support from one migrant’s generation to the other, enabling formal education and subsequent professional careers, took place in many family networks and largely contributed to the high levels of education and human development which today characterize the Wakhi community of Gojal.

4. Conclusion

From the detailed inquiry into the early phases of out-migration from Gojal, which has been undertaken in this paper, it has become clear how central the role which individual pioneering migrants have played in the process of mobility change and expansion of the Wakhi of Gojal is. Setting out to the unknown and daring to walk on unprecedented paths, these pioneers not only opened new perspectives and opportunities for themselves through their migration, but also for many of their family members and from the broader community. Subsequent migration patterns from Gojal, the hopes and expectations involved in migration, its types and organization, the pathways and destinations chosen and the kind of activities taken up at the target were largely shaped and influenced by the examples of successful pioneering migrants and their experiences. From the presented examples of early migrants from Gulmit, Hussaini and Passu, it also became clear that equally important is the role of solidarity networks which operate at different levels and are based on different kinds of ties. The analytical focus on social units of the household, family, kinship

networks and communities, as suggested by FAIST (1998) and PRIES (2001), has helped to trace and identify solidarity systems operating at different levels and based on different kinds of ties. These solidarity systems have shown to provide the social context in which migration, in line with PRIES (2001), MASSEY (1990) and others understood as a collective process, is embedded. Faist's conception of "social ties" and "symbolic ties" (FAIST 1998:218-220) provided an important key for a deeper understanding of the structures and processes in these networks. Solidarity based on symbolic ties was crucial for the success of the early migrants in Karachi. The affluent *khoja* community provided support for *maulai* migrants based on the symbolic ties of a shared *Ismaili* identity, facilitated by efforts of the Aga Khan to bring the two groups together under a unified religious setup. Support within the *maulai* diaspora in Karachi was provided based on the symbolic ties of being from the same region (Hunza, Gojal) and being from the same ethno-linguistic group (Wakhi) as well as on social, inter-personal ties based on kinship, friendship or neighbourhood. In line with MASSEY's (1990:8) conception, particularly kinship ties proved to play a central role for mechanisms of cumulative causation of migration and the operation of sustained circles of support and facilitation from one migrants' generation to the other. The decisive shift from labour migration to student migration was only possible through support and solidarity within family networks and laid the basis for the subsequent socio-economic developments among the *Gojali* Wakhi community. In the 1970s, the first student migrants from Gojal graduated from higher education institutions, found well-paid jobs and proceeded in their careers. They provide successful examples for realizing social mobility through geographical mobility, a link which is controversially discussed in the migration literature (see DE HAAS 2010). Their financially strong position allowed them to enhance their support for family members, particularly for the sake of education. Since then, the migration patterns from Gojal have strongly diversified and new forms of migration were added to the broadening spectrum of geographic mobility. The far-reaching changes and developments within the *Gojali* Wakhi community over the last seven decades, which have turned them into a model community e.g. with respect to education levels, have to be seen in the context of these migration processes. The early migrants from the region and the various solidarity networks, which facilitated their own and the subsequent generations' migration, have a huge stake in these developments.

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Information on the competence network Crossroads Asia

The competence network Crossroads Asia derives its name from the geographical area extending from eastern Iran to western China and from the Aral Sea to Northern India. The scholars collaborating in the competence network pursue a novel, 'post-area studies' approach, making thematic figurations and mobility the overarching perspectives of their research in Crossroads Asia. The concept of figuration implies that changes, minor or major, within one element of a constellation always affect the constellation as a whole; the network will test the value of this concept for understanding the complex structures framed by the cultural, political and socio-economic contexts in Crossroads Asia. Mobility is the other key concept for studying Crossroads Asia, which has always been a space of entangled interaction and communication, with human beings, ideas and commodities on the move across and beyond cultural, social and political borders. Figurations and mobility thus form the analytical frame of all three main thematic foci of our research: conflict, migration, and development.

- Five sub-projects in the working group **"Conflict"** will focus upon specific localized conflict-figurations and their relation to structural changes, from the interplay of global politics, the erosion of statehood, and globalization effects from above and below, to local struggles for autonomy, urban-rural dynamics and phenomena of diaspora. To gain a deeper understanding of the rationales and dynamics of conflict in Crossroads Asia, the sub-projects aim to analyze the logics of the genesis and transformation of conflictual figurations, and to investigate autochthonous conceptions of, and modes of dealing with conflicts. Particular attention will be given to the interdependence of conflict(s) and mobility.
- Six sub-projects in the working group **"Migration"** aim to map out trans-local figurations (networks and flows) within Crossroads Asia as well as figurations extending into both neighboring and distant areas (Arabian Peninsula, Russia, Europe, Australia, America). The main research question addresses how basic organizational and functional networks are structured, and how these structures affect what is on the move (people, commodities, ideas etc.). Conceptualizing empirical methods for mapping mobility and complex connectivities in trans-local spaces is a genuine desideratum. The aim of the working group is to refine the method of qualitative network analysis, which includes flows as well as their structures of operation, and to map mobility and explain mobility patterns.
- In the **"Development"**-working group four sub-projects are focusing on the effects of spatial movements (flows) and interwoven networks at the micro level with regard to processes of long-term social change, and with a special focus on locally perceived livelihood opportunities and their potential for implementation. The four sub-projects focus on two fundamental aspects: first, on structural changes in processes of transformation of patterns of allocation and distribution of resources, which are contested both at the household level and between individual and government agents; secondly, on forms of social mobility, which may create new opportunities, but may also cause the persistence of social inequality.

The competence network understands itself as a mediator between the academic study of Crossroads Asia and efforts to meet the high demand for information on this area in politics and the public. Findings of the project will feed back into academic teaching, research outside the limits of the competence network, and public relations efforts. Further information on Crossroads Asia is available at www.crossroads-asia.de.

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